



Malaya Books had intended to publish another collection of essays by Renato Constantino after the publication of his forthcoming book, "The Making of a Filipino". However, because his book, "The Filipinos in the Philippines," is being used in various Philippine colleges and universities, Malaya Books decided on a second collection of essays. This cheaper edition for students' use is urgently needed inasmuch as the original edition is already exhausted.

#### Reactions and Comments:

"Constantino's book will be particularly useful for the leaders of this administration, who seem ready to nourish the same colonial ills."

ERNESTO GRANADA,  
Manila Chronicle, October 18, 1966

"..... sa pluma ni Constantino ay nagtambal ang tapang ng mga satira ni Rizal at ang talim ng gulok ni Bonifacio."

AMADO V. HERNANDEZ  
Taliba, March 15, 1969

*(Continued on inside back cover)*

# THE FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES

AND OTHER ESSAYS  
BY RENATO  
CONSTANTINO

FOREWORD BY  
SENATOR LORENZO M. TAÑADA  
INTRODUCTION BY  
EMILIO AGUILAR CRUZ



RENATO CONSTANTINO

**THE FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES  
AND OTHER ESSAYS**

*Reprinted by*



**MALAYA BOOKS INC.**  
QUEZON CITY PHILIPPINES

RENATO CONSTANTINO

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### Preface to the Third Printing

All but one of the essays in this collection first appeared in print more than ten years ago. "The Miseducation of the Filipino", though it was first published in 1966, was actually written in 1959 but an intensification of the harassment I had been subjected to since 1951 closed the pages of Philippine periodicals to my writing for the next seven years.

Although I believe that most of these essays need revision for the more enlightened present-day reader, I have resisted the temptation to up-date the text.

These revisions, were I to make them now, would fall under two categories: revisions which would express more explicitly what I already believed then, and revisions which would reflect my ideas today. The first would be unrealistic since it would take the writing out of the context of the times; the second would be dishonest.

It is important to bear in mind that when these essays were written many of the ideas that are today practically orthodox could not be expressed in straightforward language then. The political climate made some amount of vagueness necessary. Reaction was so strong that merely liberal ideas were often regarded as subversive. Furthermore, to reach people, I had to consider the state of mind of the miseducated Filipino of that time. Adjustments had to be made, first to break into print and second to penetrate the walls of prejudice and misconception that insulated the colonial mind from new ideas.

If taken within the context of the times in which they were written, these essays may give the reader some idea of the McCarthyist era as well as an appreciation of the distance we have covered since then.

These early essays will also give those who have read my later works an insight into my own intellectual development. This may serve as an indicator of how changes in society are reflected in the developing consciousness of an individual. My hope is that this developing consciousness has in turn helped in some small way to effect further changes in society.

Finally, the continuing demand for this first collection of essays — dated as they are — and my own personal observations convince me that despite the heroic propaganda efforts of today's committed youth there are still many individuals for whom these essays continue to be relevant because they belong to the same type of readers I tried to reach during the fifties. This third printing is for them.

RENATO CONSTANTINO

February 15, 1971

## FROM THE FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

Having known Mr. Constantino for a good number of years, both as a friend and a fellow nationalist, I read these essays when they were first published as early as 1957. Reading them again now, I am struck by their continuing relevance, and by the fact that many other Filipinos since then have taken similar nationalist positions. Mr. Constantino certainly has done his share to bring about some of our present nationalist reawakenings.

Philippine society has been written about by both foreigners and Filipinos, however, many of the studies have been for a specialized readership, particularly among the academic social behaviorists. Encumbered by technicisms, the studies were beyond the layman Filipino reader. Where the articles and essays on the manners, morals, and customs of the Filipinos were written in the popular vein, they were descriptive rather than critical or analytical. Dealing more with particular aspects of Philippine life, the essays seldom related to Philippine society as a whole. The essays in THE FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES are addressed to the layman Filipino reader. Couched in simple yet forceful language, they will help the Filipino reader to know his own society better and will reveal him to himself.

Few writers have presented a unified view of our society. Fewer still have presented Filipino society from the nationalist point of view. Renato Constantino's essays in this collection constitute a laudable beginning in this direction. I am confident that this book will

be useful to the Filipino in the classroom, in the government service, in the professions. To the foreigner-reader this book may lend illumination toward an understanding of Philippine society as it has evolved from foreign political, economic, and social influences.

Whether satirical or seriously analytical, the essays in this book provoke the reader to a reacquaintance with his society and challenge him to review existing concepts in the light of the nationalist thesis. This nationalist thesis is the underlying foundation of Mr. Constantino's unified views on different aspects of Philippine life. This thesis can be summarized thus:

Philippine society developed through centuries of colonial servitude. Though we consider ourselves independent, the marks of our colonial status remain, and not only in the objective reality of our politics, our economy, our social life, but even more so in the internal reality of our minds — in our ideas about other nations, in our views and attitudes regarding ourselves, in our habits, in our values, and in our goals as a national community. Colonialism is the root cause of all our problems. The solution lies in a positive assertion of nationalism in every aspect of Philippine society. Such an assertion of our nationalism inevitably collides with those aspects of Philippine-American relations which negate our independence, politically as well as economically. Furthermore, because cultural nationalism for us can only start with a painstaking reassessment of American cultural influence, any study of present Philippine society must take into account the impact of American ideas and policies on our country and people.

It is significant and appropriate that this book is published soon after the publication by the Recto Memorial Foundation of the *Recto Reader*, edited by Mr. Renato Constantino. These two books constitute a

distinct contribution to the propagation of the nationalist thinking on Philippine problems. I recall that several years ago the late Senator Claro M. Recto wrote on a book he gave to Mr. Constantino the following dedication, "To Renato Constantino, patriot, nationalist, a great mind." The praise is well-deserved and just, as the essays in this book will affirm.

LORENZO M. TAÑADA

The Senate of the Philippines  
September, 1966

## FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST EDITION

Everyone is familiar with "The Filipino Essay in English." But what is wrong with merely calling it "The Filipino Essay"? When the first anthology of essays by Filipinos — *Thinking for Ourselves* — compiled by Assistant Professors Vicente Hilario and Eliseo Quirino of the English Department, University of the Philippines — was put out just a little over 40 years ago most of the pieces were translations from the Spanish. I like to think of Filipinos writing their essays in every language of which they have an adequate command, whether vernacular or foreign. And, indeed, I know many a fine essay in Tagalog which Messrs. Hilario and Quirino might have well included in their collection if it had been published 20 years later.

The essays in this book by Mr. Renato Constantino need no "in English" qualification. Not only is the qualifier something of an apology for possible stylistic imperfections; it is totally unnecessary when we conceive of Filipinos writing as Filipinos.

The aforementioned anthologists wrote in their foreword:

In preparing this volume . . . we are aware that we are also portraying the Filipino mind . . . It is hardly necessary to state that these essays should be discussed (in the classroom) for their thought-provoking values . . . *Thinking* is to be emphasized; and thinking must begin by *thinking for one's self*. These essays are, then, not offered as models of English prose, but as examples of Filipino thought expressed in English.

That the essays in question were all in English was purely a classroom expediency; two thirds of them were in Spanish originally. They were not meant to demonstrate the Filipino writer's skill with the English tongue, let alone serve as examples of "The Filipino Essay in English," and even less as small literary masterpieces. The time had not yet come when the Filipino writing in English could produce a respectable imitation of Charles Lamb or (some years later) Christopher Morley or (still later) E. B. White. *Thinking for Ourselves* was, rather, an antidote for the alienation of educated Filipino thinking from its own roots which had already started and which was duly noted and deplored by some of the authors there represented.

Well, "The Filipino Essay in English" did acquire the airs and graces of its models not long after. The generation that succeeded Laurel, Palma, and Maximo Kalaw, among others, was inclined, in fact, to patronize its literary elders for their seeming dullness. For its *metier* was not the didactic but the familiar essay, and intimacy, now gay, now sad, was its accustomed pose. Heaven only knows what might have become of "The Filipino Essay in English" if the familiar essay had not gone out of fashion among English and American writers themselves and had continued to be cultivated in *that* form. A pastime of genteel spinsters or old bachelors, probably.

I should be the last to say, though, that nothing had been lost from that demise. Like many reading people of middleage, I could wish the familiar essay were more with us still, instead of being supplanted on the one hand by the "funny piece" sired by the *New Yorker* out of *Mad* and on the other hand by pseudo-learned articles mouthing the jargon of — shall we say — "The Filipino Social Science Professor in English."

But the loss is relative and, I should say, amply compensated by the appearance of another kind of es-



say, which would have been most suitable for the purpose of "Thinking for Ourselves."

The essays of Mr. Renato Constantino have this distinction. The author might have been more felicitous here and there and would doubtless have made the emendations himself, if he did not believe—and rightly so, I think—that already published work should not be tampered with in the reprinting. But Mr. Constantino has aimed, in any case, not at breaking into some literary anthology or other but in writing out his thoughts on the State of the Filipino Mind in our time. And considering how confused that mind is in the political and social realm, we might say that Mr. Constantino is not only "thinking for one's self" but thinking for other people as well.

The virtue then of the essays of Mr. Constantino in this book lies not so much in the clarity and effectiveness of his manner and style in the use of the English language as an expression of the nationalist Filipino mind, as in the dominant theme and subject he has chosen to write about—the Filipinos in the Philippines. This is a consistent pre-occupation with Mr. Constantino which should earn for him the title of "The Filipino writer's Filipino writer." His commitment has the force of that tradition of duty which was best exemplified in Marcelo del Pilar at one time.

E. AGUILAR CRUZ

*The Daily Mirror*  
September, 1966  
Manila, Philippines

## THE FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES\*

THE FILIPINOS CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST MINORITY GROUP in the Philippines. The present native inhabitants are the survivors of that race which suffered the brutalization of the Spaniards, the "extermination campaign" of the American troops during the Filipino-American War, and the mass executions of the Japanese.

Ethnically, these people belong to the Malay group, though strains of Chinese, Indian, and Spanish blood may be found. Recently, however, a great deal of American blood has been pouring into the country. The introduction of this strain into the Filipino bloodstream has greatly improved the height of Filipino basketball players and the shape of Philippine movie stars.

Another school of thought would classify the Filipinos as an almost subhuman species. U.S. Senator MacLaurin, during the debate on the Paris peace treaty of 1898, expressed his fears of the possible annexation of the Philippines because it would mean the "incorporation of a mongrel and semi-barbarous population into our body politic," which was "inferior to, but akin to the Negro in moral and intellectual qualities and in capacity for self-government."

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\**This Week*, Manila Chronicle, October 4, 1959

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### TERRITORY

The Filipinos live in areas outside the military bases and American recreation camps. The territory occupied by these people is rapidly shrinking as Filipinos yield the choicest residential, commercial, and industrial sites to other minority groups who have found in this land a haven from economic difficulties in their own countries of origin. The continuation of this trend can lead to only one result — namely, reservations for Filipinos, similar to those enjoyed by the Ainus of Japan and the American Indians in the United States. These reservations will constitute a guarantee from grateful foreign friends that the Filipinos will always have a place in the Philippines in recognition of their having been the first inhabitants of this country.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Filipino race is the greatest answer to anthropologists who arbitrarily and unfairly classify peoples as white, black, brown, red, or yellow. The Filipinos may truly be called a super race for, as a people, they show such varied physical characteristics that they defy categorization.

#### *Brown and White*

The men belong to the brown race; the women are definitely Caucasoid of the Hollywood type, for, by means of modern cosmetology, their skins are bleached, their hair is brunette, red, or even blonde. The female physical dimensions are 35-24-35, true or false. They have fairly straight limbs and pointed toes.

#### *Blacks, Reds and Yellows*

The Negritos, along with certain Filipinas sporting ₱1.50

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permanents, may be classified under the black race because of their characteristic kinky hair. There is a sprinkling of reds among the Filipinos, notably those lately of Central Luzon, who, according to outstanding "racial experts," may be easily recognized by their incorrigible tendency to infiltrate all manner of organizations and from those vantage points criticize American domination in this country. The yellow race is represented by those Filipinos who are descended from Chinese ancestors and other yellow individuals like those who cower before diplomatic and military representatives of foreign powers.

### CHARACTER TRAITS

#### *Hospitable and Generous*

The Filipinos are a hospitable and generous people. With the exception of a certain Lapu-Lapu and some misguided "insurrectos" during the turn of the century, the Filipinos have been happy to open their shores to aliens in search of wealth. The majority have considered it a privilege to be able to offer their foreign friends all the opportunities for advancement. Their one obsession has been to make of this country what prominent foreign writers have called — "an island paradise." True to the wishes of their ancestors, the modern Filipinos have indeed transformed their country into a paradise — for non-Filipinos.

Of course, no paradise is without its serpent, and in the Philippine Eden the foreigners have discovered a species of venomous serpents whom they call "Ultra-nationalists."

#### *Land of the Brave*

Philippine history is replete with instances showing that the ancestors of modern Filipinos were proud, brave men. The modern Filipino is braver still, for he has fought and died for

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other nations and is willing to die again and again for America. Undaunted by the threat of nuclear obliteration, armed only with obsolete surplus American weapons, the Filipinos are willing to act as magnets to draw the enemy fire from continental America in a supreme gesture of gallantry which will surely amaze the world.

As a matter of fact, the Filipino is braver than the American. Time and again he has shown in the halls of the United Nations that he is not afraid to engage both the Soviet Union and Red China single-handed in mortal combat, whereas the Americans will not fight unless supported by loyal allies. The peak of Philippine bravery was reached during the time of Mag-saysay. Unfortunately, because of the influence of cowardly nationalists who insist on fighting only for national interests, Filipino bravery has diminished.

### *A Cultured Race*

The Filipino is a creature of immense talent for cultural acquisition. He has shown his discriminating taste by being receptive only to American culture, selecting for avid consumption such outstanding American contributions as cowboy movies, horror pictures, comics, rock and roll, soapbox derbies, beauty contests, teen-age idiosyncracies, advertising jingles, cocktail parties, and soft drinks. This talent of the Filipinos for assimilating only American culture, and moreover, only the best of that culture, was foreseen by T. H. Pardo de Tavera who in 1901 said:

After peace is established, all our efforts will be directed to Americanizing ourselves; to cause a knowledge of the English language to be extended and generalized in the Philippines, in order that through its agency the American spirit may take possession of us, and that we may adopt its principles, its political customs, and its peculiar civilization, that our redemption may be complete and radical.

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### *Heights of Ambition*

The typical Filipino is ambitious. The male aspires to be a junior executive in a large American firm and later to head a subsidiary of some big American corporation. A few become politicians and seek office through any of the established parties. Failure to land in any major political slate could easily be remedied by establishing a grand alliance and calling the other office seekers "professional politicians." The female, both married and unmarried, aspires to be a fashion model or a cover girl.

The typical middle-class family dreams of an RFC or GSIS-financed bungalow with a terrace, a tiled bathroom, and a bubble lamp in the living room which simply must have a semi-HI-FI radio and, if possible, a corner "bar" proudly displaying beer and coca cola bottles. Such a family raises children so that they may have the pleasure of giving them American nicknames and hearing themselves called Mommy and Daddy in contrast to less fortunate Nanays and Tatays. Their boys must go to colleges well known for their basketball teams, and their girls must receive an exclusive convent education. Of course, the family must have a second-hand car of the latest possible model or at least a re-conditioned jeep with tail fins.

In Manila, the aforementioned vehicle will most probably convey the family on its monthly outing to the exclusive Enlisted Men's Mess Hall of the JUSMAG compound, there to relish hamburger sandwiches and ice cream sundaes at PX prices.

### *Gratitude Springs Eternal*

In the eyes of their foreign friends, one of the endearing traits of the Filipinos is their child-like gratitude for little gifts or imagined favors. The Filipinos have never stopped being grateful to the American administrators for their progress in



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agriculture, commerce, industry, public works, sanitation, etc. Like naive children, they received all these as if they were gifts from their benevolent conquerors. The truth is, as A. V. H. Hartendorp, an American oldtimer, said in his latest book:

A truly remarkable fact is that all this was accomplished without financial aid from the United States. The civil administration of the Philippines was self-supporting from the beginning of the American occupation in 1898. The only expense the Philippines constituted for the United States was the expense of maintaining the United States armed forces here.

More recently, the Filipinos have found new cause for gratitude in the establishment of packaging and assembly plants which are grandiosely called industries when in truth these plants are disguised forms of importation which consume plenty of dollars for raw material purchases and for capital and profit remittances.

The basic origin for this naive propensity to feel gratitude, out of all proportion to supposed favors bestowed, is the belief shared by almost all Filipinos that they should be grateful to the U.S. for having saved them from Spanish misrule. The entire thinking of the Filipinos at present is based on the assumption that the U. S. crossed the ocean to give succor to a people who were up in arms against a cruel tyrant and would have been crushed by said tyrant had not the noble-hearted American crusaders come to their rescue.

At this point, a discussion of early Philippine-American relations would be proper in order to establish the basis of that gratitude.

### PRE-HISTORY AND HISTORY

There is no need to touch on the history of the Filipinos during the pre-Spanish and Spanish periods. In the first place,

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there are many conflicting versions of Philippine history during this period. There is a history for Catholic schools and a history for Chinese schools although, strangely enough, there is as yet no proper history for Filipinos. In the second place, historians of the American period assert that prior to the arrival of the Americans, the Filipinos, in the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, were merely "a jumble of savage tribes."

Filipino life before the coming of the Americans would therefore more properly belong to pre-history, and we should not concern ourselves with it. After all, no less than Secretary of War Elihu Root, in a speech before the Marquette Club in 1899, denied the existence of a Filipino nation when he said:

Well, whom are we fighting? Are we fighting the Philippine nation? No! There is none. There are hundreds of islands inhabited by more than sixty tribes, speaking more than sixty languages, and all but one ready to accept American sovereignty.

This statement of the American Secretary of War was the basis of popular thinking in America during that period and thereafter.

### *The Original Professional Politicians*

According to unimpeachable American sources, all the people of the Philippines were ready to welcome American occupation with the exception of the Tagalog tribe led by a group, who, in the words of General Otis quoting Manuel Manahan, were "professional politicians." We have the word of no less than President Taft that this group of revolutionaries kept up "a conspiracy of murder, a Mafia on a very large scale."

This group of Aguinaldo and Mabini was the only stumbling block to the realization of America's "manifest destiny" in these islands because, according to American intelligence, they were cruelly coercing the people to fight for the independence of their country.

*Welcome Invaders*

Indeed, the Americans were so welcome that it took them only six years to suppress resistance movements, and for this purpose they used only 120,000 American troops. Evidently, the hated revolutionists had been successful in forcing the Filipinos to fight for their independence against the Spaniards, and later the Americans, even though all the time the majority of them were just itching to be under American rule.

What techniques of mass hypnosis, what refinements of torture were used to turn a naturally pro-American people into fierce fighters for freedom, are secrets that the revolutionaries carried to their graves. The fact is that prior to the coming of that admirable Admiral George Dewey, the Filipinos had in effect deposed their cruel Castilian rulers. The revolutionary forces under Emilio Aguinaldo were in control of Luzon and the principal Visayan islands. The American liberators held only Cavite and Manila.

General Anderson stated, "We held Manila and Cavite, the rest of the Island (Luzon) was held not by Spaniards but by the Filipinos. On the other islands the Spaniards were confined to two or three fortified towns."

These were later captured by the Filipinos according to General Otis who, in his report of August 21, 1899, admitted:

Thus, in December, 1899, we find that in northern and southeastern Luzon, in (the islands of) Mindoro, Samar, Leyte, Panay and even on the coast of Mindanao and in some of the smaller islands, the aggressive Tagalog present in person and, whether civilian or soldier, supreme in authority.

This was the lone tribe which was coercing the others to fight for independence, and a diabolically clever tribe it was too, to judge from the success of its nefarious schemes.

*Fraternal Allies*

The victory of Admiral Dewey in Manila Bay confronted

the United States with the problem of what to do with a people who had dislodged their masters and who had declared their independence. Fortunately, the U.S. at that time was under the able leadership of William McKinley who had a tremendous compassion for the plight of backward peoples and knew exactly what was good for them. During the course of the war, he showed brilliant statesmanship when he said, "While we are conducting war and until its conclusion we must keep all we get; when the war is over we must keep what we want."

Under such inspired leadership, it is not surprising that the Americans executed a series of master strokes which finally released the Filipinos from the hypnotic control which the gang of revolutionaries had exercised over them. They regained their senses and gratefully relinquished control of their country to infinitely more capable hands.

One such master stroke was the maintenance of a semblance of friendship with the revolutionaries while joint action was necessary against Spanish troops. With the fall of Manila and the capture of the main bulk of the Spanish forces which was made possible only because Filipino troops then encircled the city, this silly friendship with misguided elements could be dropped. While the gullible Filipinos were jubilantly celebrating the fall of their old enemy and expecting to share with their American allies in the honors of victory, American policy makers, who were certainly more farsighted, decided it was time to put these revolutionaries in their proper place and cut them down to size before they began having an exaggerated idea of their own importance.

Judge James H. Blount in his book, *The American Occupation of the Philippines*, describes the fraternal relations

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between the two allies during the final act of the Spanish-American War:

As Aguinaldo's troops surged forward in the wake of the American advance they were stopped by orders from the American commander, and prevented from following the retreating Spaniards into Manila. They were not even allowed what is known to the modern small boy as a "look-in." They were not permitted to come into the city to see the surrender.

President McKinley's message to Congress of December, 1898, explains this treatment of Aguinaldo and his forces thus: "Divided victory was not permissible. It was fitting that whatever was to be done . . . should be accomplished by the strong arm of the U.S. alone."

### *American Altruism*

A great deal of misunderstanding has been created by the verbal understanding between Dewey and Aguinaldo before the latter returned to the islands from his exile. On the question of Philippine independence, some biographers of the admiral and some Filipino historians claim that Dewey gave Aguinaldo to understand that the U.S. was fighting Spain in order to help the Filipinos gain their freedom. Aguinaldo states categorically, "Certainly Admiral Dewey did not bring me from Hongkong to Manila to fight the Spaniards for the benefit of American trade expansion." Admiral Dewey has emphatically denied this and it is easy to believe him because as a soldier he was trained to follow orders. In May, 1898, Secretary of the Navy Long cabled Dewey "not to have political alliance with the insurgents . . . that would incur liability to maintain their cause in the future." Moreover, Dewey's attitude toward Philippine independence was expressed by him in these admirably succinct words: "That was my idea, not taking it seriously."

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That he succeeded in making Aguinaldo believe otherwise is a measure of his diplomatic skill. The good admiral would have made an eminently successful Ambassador to the Philippines were he alive today. Who knows, if he had been allowed to use his extraordinary talents for a longer period in this country, the grateful Filipinos would probably have changed the name of Manila to Dewey City instead of honoring him with only one measly boulevard.

Thus did Dewey contribute to the salvation of the majority of the Filipinos who were eagerly awaiting the implantation of American sovereignty and the exercise of American altruism in their country. How then was American altruism to be practised in these forlorn islands of the Pacific? President McKinley's instructions to the peace commissioners in Paris answer this question. He said ". . . incidental to our tenure in the Philippines is the commercial opportunity . . . the U.S. cannot accept less than the cession in full right and sovereignty of the island of Luzon."

Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, the eminent ancestor of the present U.S. representative to the U.N., as permanent chairman of the Philadelphia convention which renominated McKinley for the presidency in 1900 said, "We make no hypocritical pretense of being interested in the Philippines solely on account of others . . . . We believe in trade expansion."

A more altruistic American, Secretary of the Treasury Lyman J. Gage, summed up his entire attitude in a brief "Philanthropy and five per cent go hand in hand."

But the most honest statement of American altruistic intention was made by the Hon. Charles Denby, a member of the Schurman Commission in 1899 who, in an article which appeared in the *Forum* of February, 1899, declared, "The cold practical question remains: will the possession of these islands

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benefit us as a nation? If they will not, set them free tomorrow and let their peoples, if they please, cut each other's throats."

### *Civilizing the Lowly Filipino*

America was at the threshold of a new era. As Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Frank A. Vanderlip said, "We thus see with sudden clearness that some of the most revered of our political maxims have outlived their force, a new mainspring . . . . has become the directing force . . . the mainspring of commercialism." So that the Filipinos might be better qualified to support this new directing force of commercialism, the Americans took upon themselves the task of civilizing the lowly Filipino.

Even before the effectivity of the Paris Peace Treaty, when America still had no legal right of title over the Philippines, McKinley issued on December 21, 1898, a proclamation of "benevolent assimilation" which in effect informed the Filipinos that they were already a possession of the United States who would rule them with benevolence if they accepted its sovereignty. Otherwise, the armed forces of the United States would compel them to submit. Apparently, the independent Filipino government did not know what was good for them and their country. They resisted the benevolent invasion.

### *With Solicitude and Care*

Because of the recalcitrance of the Philippine government, the Americans had to civilize these barbaric peoples with the Krag rifle. The U.S. army troops were made conscious of their mission to treat the natives with solicitude and care. The army song of the troops under Gen. Arthur MacArthur showed the high regard of the American soldier for the Filipino.

*Damn, damn, damn the Filipino  
Pock-marked Khakiac ladrone;  
Underneath the starry flag*

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*Civilize him with a Krag,  
And return us to our own beloved home.*

*(Sung to the tune of "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching.")*

The task of civilizing these people proved extremely difficult, for the Filipinos perversely insisted on living in their old savage ways. The Americans, therefore, had to resort to various civilized means of collective punishment, torture, and mass extermination in their sincere effort to bring the Filipinos to their senses in order that they would accept the superior civilization of America. For every attack made by Filipinos on American troops, whole villages were burned. Some quarters in the U.S. questioned the method of dealing with these people. The justification may be seen in the following testimony of Gen. R.P. Hughes during a U.S. Senate investigation —

Senator Rawlins. If these shackles were of no consequence what was the utility of their destruction?

Gen. Hughes. The destruction was as a punishment. They permitted these people to come in there and conceal themselves and they gave them no sign. It is always —

Sen. Rawlins. The punishment in that case would fall, not upon the men, who could go elsewhere, but mainly upon the women and little children.

Gen. Hughes. The women and children are part of the family, and where you wish to inflict a punishment you can punish the man probably worse in that way than in any other.

Sen. Rawlins. But is that within the ordinary rules of civilized warfare? Of course you could exterminate the family, which would be still worse punishment.

Gen. Hughes. These people are not civilized.

The techniques of benevolent assimilation were varied and ingenious. The most famous was the water cure. This particular technique is described in an article in *City and State* of January 2, 1909 quoting a letter to the *Omaha World* by private A. F. Miller of the 32nd U.S. Volunteers:

Now this is the way we give them the water cure: lay them on their backs, a man standing on each hand and



each foot, then put a round stick in the mouth and pour a pail of water in the mouth and nose, and if they don't give up pour in another pail. They swell up like toads. I'll tell you it's a terrible torture.

Mr. George Kennan, the special investigator of the *Outlook*, in an article of March 9, 1901, states:

The Spaniards used the torture of water, throughout the islands, as a means of obtaining information; but they used it sparingly, and only when it appeared evident that the victim was culpable. Americans seldom do things by halves. We come here and announce our intention of freeing the people from three or four hundred years of oppression, and say 'we are strong, and powerful, and grand.' Then to resort to inquisitorial methods, and use them without discrimination, is unworthy of us, and will recoil on us as a nation.

It is painful and humiliating to have to confess that in some of our dealings with the Filipinos we seem to be following more or less closely the example of Spain. We have established a penal colony; we burn native villages near which there has been an ambush or an attack by insurgent guerrillas; we kill the wounded; we resort to torture as a means of obtaining information . . . .

Another technique is the so-called rope cure, which is described in the *Chicago Record Herald*:

A light but strong rope is passed across the throat of the man to be examined. It is crossed behind his back and carried under the armpits, the ends are again brought around the neck and over to the back, turned under the armpits and shoulders, and then the free ends are carried as a girdle around the waist just at the end of the ribs, and tied fast and securely. A stick is put through the ropes where they cross between the shoulders, and then turned to suit. "Will it make a man talk?" Mr. Loughran was asked. "A wooden Indian would make a speech if you give him the rope cure," he replied. Mr. Loughran says that this was far more effective than the water cure, which is slow. The rope cure often persuaded a native to reveal the hiding place of his gun; and it did it quickly, because he knew that as soon as he consented to talk the stick would be loosened and would fly back, relieving the agony instantaneously. Of course, if the victim should have a weak

heart, he might die of shock; but the native Filipino does not seem to be troubled with the malady.

### 'A Howling Wilderness'

Two famous generals produced by this period were General "Jake" Smith in Samar and General J.F. Bell in Batangas. In a letter to President McKinley on July 12, 1902, Secretary Root stated that Smith had given the following oral instructions:

"I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn: the more you kill and burn the better you will please me," and further, that he wanted all persons killed who were capable of bearing arms and in actual hostilities against the United States, and did in reply to a question by Major Waller asking for an age limit, designate the limit as ten years of age.

According to Moorfield Story and Marcial P. Lichauco, in their book, *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States*: "The accused bore his trial like a man. He admitted giving the orders. He did not seek to excuse them on the ground that his words were reckless talk — on the contrary, he sought to justify them. On the solitary question, therefore, of whether or not he had given the order the reviewing officers of high rank found him guilty and sentenced him to be admonished."

This, of course, was enough punishment for a man who after all was only doing his duty, albeit a bit overzealously, to make the God-forsaken island of Samar safe for democracy, and its near-savage people better qualified to profit from American tutelage.

Incidentally, all the current Filipino protestations against the brutalities of American military authorities in military bases do not take into consideration that the guilty personnel who have been shipped home to escape Philippine justice may have also been meted the supreme penalty of admonition and reprimand.

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General Bell, not to be outdone by his colleague, General Smith, established his own claim to the gratitude of the Filipino people with his efficiently humane policies. In a report dated December 26, 1901, this gallant soldier proudly sets forth the tremendous job he has assigned himself:

.....I take so large a command for the purpose of thoroughly searching each ravine, valley and mountain peak for insurgents and for food, expecting to destroy everything I find outside of towns. All able-bodied men will be killed or captured.

As a result of General Bell's devoted labors, thousands were thrown into prison and, curiously enough, many died there. If we are to believe the records, they died in prison of various types of illnesses.

The population of Batangas in 1899 before Gen. Bell's fortuitous arrival was 312,192. In 1903 there were only 257,715 Batangueños left. This commendable attempt of Gen. Bell and his minions to solve the problem of population explosion in Batangas coincidentally resulted in weeding out those undesirable elements who senselessly refused to accept benevolent American rule. It is sad to note, however, that Gen. Bell's zealous efforts were not completely successful, for Batangas still harbors to this day enough of these undesirables to be characterized as a hotbed of nationalists, led by the most ungrateful ultra-nationalist of all—the notorious Claro M. Recto.

### *New Vistas Through the English Language*

In the long run the Americans were able to suppress the resistance of the Filipinos who persisted in their unreasonable desire for independence. A half century of American rule followed, and it was during this period that the Americans demonstrated by words and by deeds their true benevolence, for everything they did for and to this country, they said they did

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for love of their little brown wards. To mention only a few of these charitable deeds:

The Americans established a system of education using English as a medium of instruction. This induced the Filipinos to forget their barbaric past, including the unwholesome lessons of the revolutionary firebrands of 1896. Moreover, English opened new vistas of Western culture to their dazed eyes and enabled them to write poetry about autumn and winter and snow on the fir trees, to know more of Paul Revere and less of Apolinario Mabini, to sing nostalgically about "My Old Kentucky Home" and "White Christmas."

But more important because of greater practical value primarily to the Filipinos and only incidentally to United States businessmen, their rudimentary command of English enabled Filipino citizens to import Hollywood movies, to purchase large quantities of American publications, and to consume a phenomenal amount of American-made goods. From Hollywood movies, the Filipinos imbibed many valuable lessons on life, love, Apaches, gangsters, and sex. Because they now possessed the advantage of reading in English, the eyes of Filipinos were opened to the wonderful world of Batman and Superman, the exciting underworld of Mickey Spillane, and the out of this world reporting of *Time* magazine. Their possession of English enabled the Filipinos to understand the masterpieces of advertising prose and thus elevated their hitherto brutish tastes so that now they ride in flamboyant cars and proudly chew gum, smoke virginia cigarettes, and drink sparkling soft drinks. A concrete evidence of the educative effects of American advertising on Filipino throats may be found in the data on soft drinks and beverages. The yearly consumption of soft drinks and other beverages of 23,000,000 Fili-

pinos is nearly 2,000,000,000 bottles or roughly 100 bottles per person including babies and centenarians.

### *Reciprocal Relations*

In trying to spare the Filipino from the rigors of industrialization and to preserve the idyllic pastoral economy so suitable to their generally childlike nature, the Americans introduced a trade pattern for the islands which assured these people an unlimited supply of ready-made American goods and in return gave them magnanimously limited quotas for their raw material exports to the American markets. They were so solicitous about the welfare of their wards that even when formal independence was finally recognized, they spared their Filipino proteges the risks of over-development through industrialization by continuing the benevolent colonial pattern under the Bell Trade Act.

### *White Man's Justice*

But this concern was not limited to the economic field, for desirous of protecting the Filipinos from Communist aggression, the Americans established and retained military bases and equipped the Philippine army with obsolete weapons. Of course, in the military bases, the superior American soldier had to be assured of real white man's justice by removing him from the pale of unreliable Oriental law. This, however, really constitutes one more instance of paternal solicitude, for in removing American criminal offenders from the jurisdiction of Philippine courts, the U.S. army is in effect relieving the congestion of Filipino court dockets. Anyway, most of the criminal offenses committed by American service men are minor matters such as running over slow-moving pedestrians or maltreating and raping unaccommodating Filipina hostesses.

### ECONOMIC LIFE

The Filipinos are indeed a lucky people for they are allowed to share in the economic life of the country. There are a few Filipino manufacturers, businessmen, and importers. There are many Filipino market vendors, beauty salon proprietors, dressmakers and tailors, and gasoline station operators. Filipinos practically monopolize labor, sidewalk vending, and jeepney driving. Enterprising Filipinos have even taken over from the Chinese the lucrative and distinguished occupation of buying and selling old newspapers and empty bottles.

According to the Chairman of the National Economic Council, non-Filipinos control seventy per cent of Philippine foreign trade and eighty per cent of domestic trade. According to the census of 1948, the total non-Filipino assets in the Philippines for seven major industry groups; namely, forestry, transportation, mining, electricity, fisheries, manufacturing and commerce, constituted 48.1 per cent of the total assets. In other words, 23,000,000 Filipinos owned only a little more of the assets in these industries than less than 1/2 million foreigners. It must be borne in mind that the share in the national wealth classified as belonging to Filipinos includes that owned by naturalized Filipinos. The native-born Filipinos, therefore, own considerably less than the figures mentioned above.

In so far as the dollar quotas are concerned, the chairman of the NEC states:

During the periods 1956, 1957 and 1958, out of the total regular dollar quotas allocated by the Central Bank, Filipinos (including the naturalized ones) were granted 48.12 per cent, 47.80 per cent, and 43.44 per cent, respectively. During the same period, foreigners were allocated 51.88 per cent, 52.20 per cent, and 56.56 per cent, respectively, which showed increasing trends in contrast to the decreasing Filipino participation or share.

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These are government figures based on formal registration of ownership and consequently do not take into consideration the widespread institution of the dummy. If they did, Filipino participation would be found to be considerably lower.

## CLOUDS IN THE HORIZON

In spite of their participation in the economic life of the country, the Filipinos today are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their position. Unfortunately, they are losing their traditional virtues of humility and hospitality and imbibing the harmful spirit of modern materialism. This makes them greedy and quite unreasonable. They believe that just because they were here first and are numerically preponderant, this is primarily their own country, and they should have a greater share of its resources. These are fallacies, of course, and are disturbing the special relations between the Philippines and the United States. Any deterioration of these relations, for whatever cause, weakens the solidarity of the free world at a time when all nations must forget their petty grievances and rally behind the leadership of the United States.

The disturbances in the traditionally happy Philippine-American relations may be laid squarely at the door of today's nationalists and the Garcia administration which instituted the Filipino First policy. The machinations of these nationalists have been so successful that they have already infected the majority of the Filipinos with the incurable madness of nationalism. Before the few Filipinos who happily still remain untouched by this insanity succumb to the malady, it is the considered opinion of the writer that they be transported immediately to the United States under the leadership of the Grand Alliance and those of the Liberal Party who have proven their

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loyalty to America. There they will find a haven which they richly deserve.

As for the nationalists, these misguided elements who have sorely tried American patience and forbearance should be given their just desserts. They should be made to remain in this country and forced to solve its numerous problems without American technical advisers, develop its resources without American aid, and shoulder the burdens of independent existence.

If, after instituting their ill-conceived nationalist policies, the country becomes industrialized and prosperous and inherits the problems common to wealthy nations, the nationalists will have no one to blame but themselves.



## THE SOCIETY PAGE\*

NEXT TO THE COMICS PAGE, THE SOCIETY PAGE IS, PERHAPS, the most widely read section of our Manila newspapers. The front page may offer exulting headlines about a projected moonshoot or loudly proclaim renewed intensification of the cold war, but most readers merely look at the Gothic types and the first few paragraphs, then impatiently turn the pages first for a quick review of what's showing in the downtown theaters, then for a longer perusal of the comics pages, and, finally, settle down to attentive, concentrated reading of the society page. This is the unchanging reading pattern of many Filipinas — and Filipinos.

Perhaps, nothing short of an announcement of imminent annihilation, via nuclear bombing, can jolt these loyal adherents of the society columns into dropping their favorite reading fare in favor of news of greater national and international import.

Never having acquired this pleasant habit of blithely disregarding the state of the world in order to concentrate on who wore what at the latest fashionable wedding, I have always wondered at the great number of happy people whose charming world is bounded by the society pages of the morning dailies and the fashion pictorials of our Sunday magazines. I decided I would try to enter this other world, though only as an interested bystander. I suspect that my decision was prompted partly by a temporary disenchantment with the squabbling world of politics and the problem-laden world of economics.

\**This Week*, Manila Chronicle, December 7, 1958

## THE SOCIETY PAGE

I began reading the society page. I am now a confirmed reader of the "deathless prose" of our society columnists. Theirs is indeed a fascinating world full of the most exciting revelations.

### HISTORY BENEATH ROUTINE REPORTAGE

The society page, critically read, provides much more than a report of daily social activities. It reflects the changing history, thinking, development, culture, and idiosyncracies of the Filipino people. It should be read by political scientists, economists, sociologists, and historians, for, to one and all, the society page will reveal facts of great importance to their various studies of Philippine life. Actually, the society page should be a source material for any serious work on the changing phases of our economic development and their concomitant social and cultural manifestations.

That may sound like a sweeping generalization. Nevertheless, I do not make it lightly. The society page is all that, and more. True, it is a chronicle of the events in the charmed lives of "high society" (Manila's 400-now-turned-4000) but it is at the same time a reflection of certain basic and fundamental changes in Philippine society. For beneath the routine reportage of births and marriages, and the occasional breathless descriptions of upper-crust affairs, one can notice several important changes. Most important among these is the changing composition of Philippine society as reflected in the changing composition of "high society."

### "ALTA SOCIEDAD" OF PRE-WAR DAYS

A cursory glance at the society pages of the pre-war period and a review of the post-war social doings will show the meta-

morphosis of Philippine society. From the early days of American occupation to the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the second world war, the society pages treated with due deference the social affairs in which Manila's four hundred participated. And who were the leaders of this set?

High society was largely dominated by the landed aristocracy. Acknowledged members of "alta sociedad" were rich families of Spanish ancestry, Spanish-Filipino mestizos who sprang from the wealthy *ilustrado* class, and Filipinos who were owners of huge haciendas. Land still being the primary source of wealth, it was also the basis for social recognition. Thus, the hacendero had social status. The feudal structure of our economy, naturally, lent prestige to the landed aristocracy. Because of their family's status, the sons and daughters of the landed gentry automatically became members of high society. Their affairs were also extensively reported on in the society pages, and both their activities and their persons were aped by the youth of the middle and lower classes, who looked up to their social superiors and accepted their superiority as a matter of course.

Social stratification was quite marked, and the upper circles were exclusive, social status being invariably looked upon as an inherited privilege. This being the prevailing viewpoint, there was very little successful social climbing.

#### EARMARKS OF THE "BUENA FAMILIA"

Spanish was the *lingua franca* of high society. Anybody who did not have a command of the language did not qualify for acceptance in exclusive circles. Inability to speak Spanish was considered an indication that one's forbears could not have

been among the "old families." In short, not "de buena familia."

For after all, the pre-war upper circles were composed of the people who took over from, or were actually remnants of, the social set during the Spanish regime. As such, they were Spanish-oriented, conceded that English might be the language of business, but firmly insisted that Spanish was the language of cultured society. This Spanish orientation can be easily discerned in the social accounts of those days — the ladies went to *meriendas*, attended *verbenas*, flocked to *zarzuelas*, and called their daughters Chiquita, Nenita, or Monina.

#### THE SOCIAL ARISTOCRACY AND THE CONQUERORS

I suspect that this Spanish orientation, together with a rather supercilious attitude toward the early Americans as not cultured enough for the cream of society (an attitude derived no doubt from the prevailing European view of Americans as cultural barbarians), delayed somewhat the social merger of the new political rulers and our upper social circles.

For a while, side by side with reports on Spanish-Filipino social affairs, there were published accounts of the teas and benefits of American missionary groups, as well as the parties of ranking officials of the U.S. Army and other American administrators. Later, with administration firmly established in American hands, the two sources of power, the politico-administrative led by the American Governor-General and the economic (and therefore social) exemplified by the landed gentry, gravitated toward each other. The governors could not ignore the social aristocracy and these, therefore, were invariably invited to state functions. More or less the same social groups dominated the social scene through successive American gov-

ernors and the Commonwealth period. This relative rigidity in social stratification continued up to the outbreak of the second world war.

#### DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE SOCIAL CIRCLE

The Japanese occupation began the process which finally blurred the divisions between social strata. Military occupation, financial reverses, the scarcity of accustomed luxuries, the general uncertainty of the times — all these militated against any large-scale entertaining. Evacuation, as well as the difficulty of transportation even between districts of the city, broke up the old social circles and threw the socially prominent families into contact with other groups in the evacuation site or in their neighborhood. The general scarcity of luxury items also made class distinctions less marked. Aristocratic feet were shod in intricately carved *bakya*, but they were *bakya* just the same, not Delman or Miller shoes.

The turbulent carnival-like days of the American GI added still other factors which completed the metamorphosis of the old society. The buy and sell *nouveaux riches*, the speculators, the import-export parvenus were all making money hand over fist in the wild spending spree indulged in by both the luxury-starved Filipinos and the victorious American Army. By and large, these were fortunes made by men without aristocratic family background, who had seized upon the economic dislocation and made their pile through their daring and enterprise. Aggressive salesmanship was their distinguishing characteristic. The same push that they used in advancing their business, they now utilized to sell themselves. The public relations techniques, the promotional campaigns that worked so well for their firms or those that they served, could be utilized,

too, in carving for these new people a secure niche in high society.

Since the early post-war days, the society page has revealed the rising predominance of the commercial classes in our changing society. New names have come into social prominence — new people of whom family-conscious aristocrats might peevishly complain, "Who are they, we have never heard of that family name." Nevertheless, the new names continue to establish themselves, using the society pages to prove to all and sundry their acceptability, indeed, even their leadership of the changing social life. The old names have either chosen to withdraw from active social participation or have been engulfed in the growing democratization of the social circle. Some of the landed gentry have themselves entered the business world and have therefore adopted its ways.

#### THE TWILIGHT OF EXCLUSIVISM

In what ways does present-day society differ from the old society? Both bear the stamp of their economic origin. Wealth based on land is stable and largely inherited. Landed gentry, therefore, have a strong sense of family solidarity and pride, believe in the importance of the right heritage, and are upholders of tradition. Landed wealth being almost self-perpetuating, their owners are conservative rather than enterprising, take their status for granted, and accept their social leadership as a matter of course. They consider this status more or less permanent and their circle more or less exclusive. Hence, they regard all forms of self-advertising as undignified and all types of social climbing as bad taste.

The social leaders of today derive their wealth mainly from commerce and business. Commercial wealth is suscep-

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tible to drastic ups and downs. In a young country where business has only recently gained a toehold, new fortunes are being built. It is still the era of the self-made man. New prosperity may also be attained by relative unknowns, as junior executives or managers of subsidiaries of foreign firms. These firms being mostly American, it is natural that the new social leaders are American-oriented in ideas, manners, and tastes. Business success being dependent on initiative and aggressive enterprise, the widest possible contacts, good public relations, and constant publicity, many in the rising commercial class use their formula for business success to achieve social prominence. And why not? What has served them well in one field should be equally efficacious in another. Consequently, today's social circles are much less exclusive and also much less stable.

### SOCIAL CLIMBING IS GOOD PUBLIC RELATIONS

New names are constantly cropping up and taking the place of others who, perhaps because of business reverses, recede from the limelight. The businessman's desire for the widest possible contacts makes him less exclusivistic, and although human vanity would tend to make him wish to limit the circle of VIP's, good business sense tells him that democracy is more profitable. The huge cocktail party, a kind of catch-all to which all sorts of people are invited, has therefore become an institution. And anyway, new people are constantly pushing themselves up into the higher social circles while others are being pushed out so that it is useless to adopt an exclusivistic attitude. If they can afford it, they can be in the social swim.

Social climbing has become respectable. Of course, it is called good public relations and relies on constant publicity. After all, it is good business to be seen in the right places with

## THE SOCIETY PAGE

the right people, especially if one is in the picture which will appear in tomorrow's society page.

### THE AGE OF THE PRESS RELEASE

Society editors no longer have to keep track of important social affairs in order to send reporters and photographers at the appropriate time. This is the age of the press release in politics as well as in society. Many enterprising people who want to achieve or to maintain social prominence by means of publicity have their own battery of photographers and PRO's. The latter's job is to write the appropriate press release and, with patient tenacity, to remind, cajole, and badger the society editor into publishing the all-important news item and photograph, with all the names correctly spelled. The society editors of today are swamped with all kinds of photographs and social announcements from all sorts of people who plead, clamor, and occasionally, threaten to withdraw advertising contracts just to get a piece of precious publicity for themselves.

People don't want a place in the sun any more — they want a place in the society page.

This mania for publicity, which some find so repugnant, is merely part of the *modus operandi* of the good salesman. He sells himself as he sells his product. One is just as much of a promotional job as the other.

I would like to caution the unsociable grouches among my readers not to condemn this penchant of the elite for employing PRO's and photographers. After all, this idiosyncrasy provides employment for hundreds of people. It is, therefore, a worthwhile contribution to the solution of our unemployment problem.

## THE VERNACULAR SOCIETY PAGE: A POOR RELATION

Incidentally, the scramble for space on the society page applies only to the society pages of the leading English dailies. Press releases about important social affairs are sent to all the English-language dailies, but seldom to the vernacular ones. The vernacular society editor is not harassed like her colleagues. A quick review of the English-language newspaper issues of any one-week period will show that the major social affairs are covered by all these papers. A tell-tale and amusing indication of the PRO's handiwork is the publication of exactly the same picture in two or more English-language papers. However, the vernacular issues of the same period carry only very few of these pictures of the social elite. Can it be that the much smaller circulation of the vernacular dailies is a discouraging factor for the publicity-conscious? Or is this disregard for the vernacular society page another manifestation of prejudice against the vernacular?

Our social elite can say that it is useless to have their pictures appear in the vernacular papers, since these are not read by any of their friends. That is true, of course, but certainly the "great unwashed" deserve an occasional glimpse of their social superiors to provide them with the necessary incentive to rise to a better life.

## THE CAREER DEBUTANTE

The aggressive resourcefulness which characterizes the successful businessman is, oddly enough, best exemplified in society by the launching of the career debutante. The career debutante is a phenomenon of present society. Like the business society from which she springs, she is aggressive, resourceful, energetic, self-reliant, and single-minded. She

devotes all her assets of mind and body to realize her principal goal: popularity through publicity. Unlike her counterpart in the old landed aristocracy, she hardly relies on family status. Whereas the debutante of the old days was presented by her family, the career debutante is a self-made personality. She may or may not come from a prominent family, she may or may not have "come out" in the time-honored manner, but she certainly goes ahead on her own steam, realizing her goal of popularity by relentlessly pursuing all opportunities for publicity. This she achieves by appearing as magazine cover girl, modelling in fashion shows, ushering for benefit affairs, assisting in charity drives, and always making sure that all her activities are fully reported in the press, with her picture if possible.

## TRADITION-ORIENTED VS. NOVELTY-ORIENTED ATTITUDES

Another important change engendered by the predominance of commercial groups in social circles is the destruction of the tradition-oriented attitudes of the old families. In the past, certain social affairs were held and religiously attended by the elite because they were part of the traditions of a stable, well-ordered life. Thus Christmas Day was always spent receiving their godchildren, tenants, and poor relations. The New Year was invariably greeted at the traditional New Year's ball in the club to which their own parents had belonged. And the feast of the patron saint of the hacienda always meant an exodus to the farm.

The drive today is for something new, something better than the old, or at any rate, something different from the old. There is keen competition among hostesses over who can produce the most bizarre decorations or concoct the most startlingly

new motif for a party. The competition is frantic and possibly nerve-wracking, but it's probably a good exercise for the imagination. Its results are recorded for posterity in the society pages, which publish pictures of women with birds on their heads and men in bathrobes at a come-as-you-were-when-you-received-this-invitation party.

The commercial spirit, with its cultivation of competition and its obsession with innovations and variety, could not but undermine the old settled society. There have been attempts to recapture some of the old traditions, but these have invariably failed. For example, nostalgia for the old exclusivism led to the attempted revival of certain organizations. The response was not enthusiastic. Life had changed too much; the old members were too busy to indulge in their former group pursuits, and their children now belonged to different social circles and, therefore, could not form a cohesive group.

A more interesting attempt to revive an old tradition was rather widely publicized during the choice of the last Miss Philippines. The avowed intention was to regain for our Miss Philippines the national prestige which her predecessors had enjoyed. Although the contest-winner was a happy choice both in terms of beauty and (for the aristocratic remnants) in terms of family background, the past could not be recaptured. The traditional beauty contest of the pre-war days attracted national attention. There was only one Miss Philippines then, and during an entire year, her participation in charity drives was enough to draw large crowds. Today, we have beauty contests almost every day. We have legions of Miss This and Miss That. Naturally, the public can not be expected to keep up with this plethora of beauty contest winners.

Thus, in charity drives, these beauties cannot be relied upon to draw the same crowds that pre-war beauty queens used

to attract. Today, their place has been taken by screen actresses, who, for this reason, have invaded the domain of high society and the society page. Of course, this is another instance of the blurring of the upper social stratifications and the widening ranks of the so-called social elite.

## THE GROWING AMERICANIZATION OF HIGH SOCIETY

The society page constantly reveals still one more change in high society, as well as in Philippine society in general. This is our growing Americanization. American names and Americanized nicknames fill the guest lists of the hostesses. There are scores of Marilyns, Juliets, Helens, Marilous, Rosemaries, etc. Those who do not have the good fortune of owning American-sounding names do the next best thing — they have Americanized nicknames. Thus we have Frankie, Bobby, Cora, Betty. Even Santiago is no longer Tiago, he is Santy. Gorgonia would probably hide her embarrassment by answering to Ony or even Gorgeous, and Pascasio would become Pasky. These people with the American nicknames probably celebrate Valentine's and Halloween, and occasionally appear in the society pages as guests at a Roaring Twenties party, a hillbilly affair, or a barn dance featuring square dancing and ten-gallon hats.

## APING IN THE LOWER SOCIAL LEVELS

These changes in the composition, attitudes, modes, and manners of high society have seeped down to the middle income groups, and even lower in certain instances. The fashion fads, the new types of parties, the American names, the scramble for publicity are all aped in the lower social levels although on a reduced scale, obviously because of limited resources.



Thus Juan de la Cruz's daughter (appropriately named Marilyn) is also planning a coming-out party. Her dress may not come from a top-flight couturier, but the neighborhood *costurera* will be quite capable of producing a reasonable facsimile of the latest fashion shape. Mr. de la Cruz's finances will rule out the hiring of a fashionable social hall for the occasion, but a picture of himself and his wife, with their debutante daughter between them and the second-hand upright piano behind them, will look quite distinguished. Besides, no one will be able to tell from the picture how small their sala really is. The caption underneath the picture will read thus:

Chief Clerk and Mrs. Juan de la Cruz presented their daughter Marilyn at a coming-out party held a few days ago at their residence on Kidlat St., 1198-B Interior. The new debutante is a secretarial student of the Sapak Memorial College. Mr. de la Cruz is an executive of the Seven Seas Enterprises.

For this all-important debut of the family (Mr. de la Cruz's face has never yet graced the society page), the De la Cruzes will mobilize all available resources. The most important preparation will consist in contacting, two weeks before the event, a friend who is a friend of a society reporter, to insure publication of the all-important debut picture. When, after nearly two weeks, the society page finally publishes the anxiously awaited picture, all the neighbors on Calle Kidlat Interior will rejoice with the happy family. The caption will be read aloud at least seven times, clippings will be sent to relatives in the province, and one copy will be pasted in the album — there to repose in dignified solitude for the edification of posterity.

#### DOLLARS AND CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

The social scientist who has found the society page full of fascinating and useful revelations would not hesitate to rec-

ommend it to his colleague, the economic analyst. The society page offers the latter daily proof of the manner in which our social mores aggravate our economic problems.

The society editor feeds her readers with a steady diet of *bienvenidas* and *despedidas*. Everyone seems to be going abroad either on a combined business and pleasure trip, for a medical check-up, or to a finishing school. Central Bank restrictions notwithstanding, the rigodon of arrivals and departures continues unabated. The new arrivals are welcomed back with a series of *bienvenidas* at which their new acquisitions from abroad are avidly inspected or discussed. The competitive, novelty-oriented nature of society easily creates new tastes for similar goods which, subsequently, have a mysterious way of appearing in the country in defiance of all economic bans. The dollars spent on these generally non-essential trips constitute only the initial drain on our dollar reserves. The conspicuous consumption of imported goods which is the consequence of the trip, and sometimes its real *raison d'être* rapidly creates new tastes, whets new appetites. Demand is created for the importation or smuggling in of luxury items, thus diverting precious dollars away from the legitimate purchase of capital goods and essential commodities.

#### CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

Incidentally, the multi-honoree and multi-host *bienvenida-despedida* party in vogue today, is in keeping with the commercial spirit of the times. It illustrates that time-honored commercial fact — it is cheaper to buy wholesale than to buy retail.

## THE FILIPINOS IN THE PHILIPPINES

### CLEARING HOUSE FUNCTIONS

I earnestly hope that this discussion of the serious uses of the society page may establish its claim to scholarly attention. There is no question, however, that the society page occupies a secure niche in the hearts of its legions of loyal adherents. Its disappearance would create a void in their lives. The society page fulfills many functions not only for members of the elite circles, but for those who can not expect to cross over to the right side of the tracks. It is a clearing house for the newest fads in dress, parties, and even honeymoons. It provides the means by which the ideas, tastes, manners, and consumption habits of the upper sets can percolate downward for the enlightenment and guidance of the populace. Hence, the society page helps to create, especially in the lower class, aspirations for "the better life."

### HIGH SOCIETY AND ART

Aside from announcements of births, marriages, and social affairs, the society page consistently carries accounts of theatrical and musical performances. Someone accustomed to foreign newspapers with their separate arts page, would find it strange that we lump together society and art news. A careful scrutiny of the list of patrons of concerts, operas, and theater benefits would justify the present practice. Art in this country is closely linked with high society and, therefore, cultural activities are at the same time social gatherings. In fact, a gala concert is, for many, only one more occasion to display the latest in fashion and jewelry. The presence of art news in the society page is, therefore, merely a true reflection of our general indifference to art and culture.

## THE SOCIETY PAGE

### FOR THE ELITE ONLY

Much as I have enjoyed my little excursion into the world of the society page, with its delightful because unintentional revelations of the foibles of our society, I must deplore the extensive readership of this page as compared with the more important parts of the newspaper.

That the society page is the favorite reading fare in this country is an indication of serious social irresponsibility and a frivolous attitude toward life. The social elite who can afford a life of self-indulgence, the business families who consider social affairs as public relations for their economic ventures — all these people should continue to pay close attention to the society page. The rest of the population, however, have nothing to gain from this obsession with the social affairs of their superiors, except perhaps, a temporary escape from their drab lives. This obsession is both useless and harmful, not only because it creates desires for extravagant consumption, but because it prevents the people from addressing themselves to the more important political, economic, and social processes which require their intelligent participation.

The democratization of the social circle, ironically, constitutes an obstacle to our progress as a nation in that the tantalizing possibility of becoming a "socialite" dissipates energies which otherwise could be devoted to more constructive undertakings.

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*DESIGN AND CONSEQUENCE*

## THE MISEDUCATION OF THE FILIPINO\*

EDUCATION IS A VITAL WEAPON OF A PEOPLE STRIVING FOR economic emancipation, political independence, and cultural renaissance. We are such a people. Philippine education, therefore, must produce Filipinos who are aware of their country's problems, who understand the basic solution to these problems, and who care enough and have courage enough to work and sacrifice for their country's salvation.

### NATIONALISM IN EDUCATION

In recent years, in various sectors of our society, there have been nationalist stirrings which were crystallized and articulated by the late Claro M. Recto. There were jealous demands for the recognition of Philippine sovereignty on the bases question. There were appeals for the correction of the iniquitous economic relations between the Philippines and the United States. For a time, Filipino businessmen and industrialists rallied around the banner of the Filipino First policy, and various scholars and economists proposed economic emancipation as an immediate goal for our nation. In the field of art, there have been signs of a new appreciation for our own culture. Indeed, there has been much nationalist activity in many areas of endeavor, but we have yet to hear of a well-organized campaign on the part of our educational leaders for nationalism in education.

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\**Weekly Graphic*, June 8, 1966

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Although most of our educators are engaged in a lively debate on techniques and tools for improved instruction, not one major educational leader has come out for a truly nationalist education. Of course, some pedagogical experts have written on some aspects of nationalism in education. However, no comprehensive educational program has been advanced as a corollary to the programs for political and economic emancipation. This is a tragic situation because the nationalist movement is crippled at the outset by a citizenry that is ignorant of our basic ills and is apathetic to our national welfare.

### NEW PERSPECTIVES

Some of our economic and political leaders have gained a new perception of our relations with the United States as a result of their second look at Philippine-American relations since the turn of the century. The reaction which has emerged as economic and political nationalism is an attempt on their part to revise the iniquities of the past and to complete the movement started by our revolutionary leaders of 1896. The majority of our educational leaders, however, still continue to trace their direct lineal descent to the first soldier-teachers of the American invasion army. They seem oblivious of the fact that the educational system and the philosophy of which they are the proud inheritors were valid only within the framework of American colonialism. The educational system introduced by the Americans had to correspond and was designed to correspond to the economic and political reality of American conquest.

### CAPTURING MINDS

The most effective means of subjugating a people is to capture their minds. Military victory does not necessarily signify

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conquest. As long as feelings of resistance remain in the hearts of the vanquished, no conqueror is secure. This is best illustrated by the occupation of the Philippines by the Japanese militarists during the second world war. Despite the terroristic regime imposed by the Japanese warlords, the Filipinos were never conquered. Hatred for the Japanese was engendered by their oppressive techniques which in turn were intensified by the stubborn resistance of the Filipino people. Japanese propagandists and psychological warfare experts, however, saw the necessity of winning the minds of the people. Had the Japanese stayed a little longer, Filipino children who were being schooled under the auspices of the new dispensation would have grown into strong pillars of the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Their minds would have been conditioned to suit the policies of the Japanese imperialists.

The molding of men's minds is the best means of conquest. Education, therefore, serves as a weapon in wars of colonial conquest. This singular fact was well appreciated by the American military commander in the Philippines during the Filipino-American war. According to the census of 1903:

General Otis urged and furthered the reopening of schools, himself selecting and ordering the text-books. Many officers, among them chaplains, were detailed as superintendents of schools, and many enlisted men, as teachers.

The American military authorities had a job to do. They had to employ all means to pacify a people whose hopes for independence were being frustrated by the presence of another conqueror. The primary reason for the rapid introduction, on a large scale, of the American public school system in the Philippines was the conviction of the military leaders that no measure could so quickly promote the pacification of the islands as education. General Arthur McArthur, in recommending a large appropriation for school purposes, said:

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This appropriation is recommended primarily and exclusively as an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people and to procure and expedite the restoration of tranquility throughout the archipelago.

### BEGINNINGS OF COLONIAL EDUCATION

Thus, from its inception, the educational system of the Philippines was a means of pacifying a people who were defending their newly-won freedom from an invader who had posed as an ally. The education of the Filipino under American sovereignty was an instrument of colonial policy. The Filipino had to be educated as a good colonial. Young minds had to be shaped to conform to American ideas. Indigenous Filipino ideals were slowly eroded in order to remove the last vestiges of resistance. Education served to attract the people to the new masters and at the same time to dilute their nationalism which had just succeeded in overthrowing a foreign power. The introduction of the American educational system was a subtle means of defeating a triumphant nationalism. As Charles Burke Elliott said in his book, *The Philippines*:

To most Americans it seemed absurd to propose that any other language than English should be used in schools over which their flag floated. But in the schools of India and other British dependencies and colonies and, generally, in all colonies, it was and still is customary to use the vernacular in the elementary schools, and the immediate adoption of English in the Philippine schools subjected America to the charge of forcing the language of the conquerors upon a defenseless people.

Of course such a system of education as the Americans contemplated could be successful only under the direction of American teachers, as the Filipino teachers who had been trained in Spanish methods were ignorant of the English language . . .

Arrangements were promptly made for enlisting a small army of teachers in the United States. At first they came

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in companies, but soon in battalions. The transport *Thomas* was fitted up for their accommodation and in July, 1901, it sailed from San Francisco with six hundred teachers — a second army of occupation — surely the most remarkable cargo ever carried to an Oriental colony.

### THE AMERICAN VICE-GOVERNOR

The importance of education as a colonial tool was never under-estimated by the Americans. This may be clearly seen in the provision of the Jones Act which granted the Filipinos more autonomy. Although the government services were Filipinized, although the Filipinos were being prepared for self-government, the department of education was never entrusted to any Filipino. Americans always headed this department. This was assured by Article 23 of the Jones Act which provided:

That there shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States, a vice-governor of the Philippine Islands, who shall have all the powers of the governor-general in the case of a vacancy or temporary removal, resignation or disability of the Governor-General, or in case of his temporary absence; and the said vice-governor shall be the head of the executive department known as the department of Public Instruction, which shall include the bureau of education and the bureau of health, and he may be assigned such other executive duties as the Governor-General may designate.

Up to 1935, therefore, the head of this department was an American. And when a Filipino took over under the Commonwealth, a new generation of "Filipino-Americans" had already been produced. There was no longer any need for American overseers in this field because a captive generation had already come of age, thinking and acting like little Americans.

This does not mean, however, that nothing that was taught was of any value. We became literate in English to a certain extent. We were able to produce more men and women who



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could read and write. We became more conversant with the outside world, especially the American world. A more widespread education such as the Americans desired would have been a real blessing had their educational program not been the handmaiden of their colonial policy. Unfortunately for us, the success of education as a colonial weapon was complete and permanent. In exchange for a smattering of English, we yielded our souls. The stories of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln made us forget our own nationalism. The American view of our history turned our heroes into brigands in our own eyes, distorted our vision of our future. The surrender of the Katipuneros was nothing compared to this final surrender, this levelling down of our last defenses. Dr. Chester Hunt characterizes this surrender well in these words:

The programme of cultural assimilation combined with a fairly rapid yielding of control resulted in the fairly general acceptance of American culture as the goal of Filipino society with the corollary that individual Americans were given a status of respect.

This, in a nutshell, was (and to a great extent still is) the happy result of early educational policy because, within the framework of American colonialism, whenever there was a conflict between American and Filipino goals and interests, the schools guided us toward action and thought which could forward American interests.

### GOALS OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

The educational system established by the Americans could not have been for the sole purpose of saving the Filipinos from illiteracy and ignorance. Given the economic and political purposes of American occupation, education had to be consistent with these broad purposes of American colonial policy. The Filipinos had to be trained as citizens of an American colony.

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The Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation of President McKinley on December 21, 1898, at a time when Filipino forces were in control of the country except Manila, betrays the intention of the colonizers. Judge Blount in his book, *The American Occupation of the Philippines*, properly comments:

Clearly, from the Filipino point of view, the United States was now determined "to spare them from the dangers of premature independence," using such force as might be necessary for the accomplishment of that pious purpose.

Despite the noble aims announced by the American authorities that the Philippines was theirs to protect and to guide, the fact still remained that these people were a conquered nation whose national life had to be woven into the pattern of American dominance. Philippine education was shaped by the overriding factor of preserving and expanding American control. To achieve this, all separatist tendencies were discouraged. Nay, they had to be condemned as subversive. With this as the pervasive factor in the grand design of conquering a people, the pattern of education, consciously or unconsciously, fostered and established certain attitudes on the part of the governed. These attitudes conformed to the purposes of American occupation.

### AN UPROOTED RACE

The first and perhaps the master stroke in the plan to use education as an instrument of colonial policy was the decision to use English as the medium of instruction. English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen. English introduced the Filipinos to a strange, new world. With American textbooks, Filipinos started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life, alien

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to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model. This was the beginning of their education. At the same time, it was the beginning of their miseducation, for they learned no longer as Filipinos but as colonials. They had to be disoriented from their nationalist goals because they had to become good colonials. The ideal colonial was the carbon copy of his conqueror, the conformist follower of the new dispensation. He had to forget his past and unlearn the nationalist virtues in order to live peacefully, if not comfortably, under the colonial order. The new Filipino generation learned of the lives of American heroes, sang American songs, and dreamt of snow and Santa Claus. The nationalist resistance leaders exemplified by Sakay were regarded as brigands and outlaws. The lives of Philippine heroes were taught but their nationalist teachings were glossed over. Spain was the villain, America was the savior. To this day, our histories still gloss over the atrocities committed by American occupation troops such as the water cure and the re-concentration camps. Truly, a genuinely Filipino education could not have been devised within the new framework, for to draw from the well-springs of the Filipino ethos would only have led to a distinct Philippine identity with interests at variance with that of the ruling power.

Thus, the Filipino past which had already been quite obliterated by three centuries of Spanish tyranny did not enjoy a revival under American colonialism. On the contrary, the history of our ancestors was taken up as if they were strange and foreign peoples who settled in these shores, with whom we had the most tenuous of ties. We read about them as if we were tourists in a foreign land.

### ECONOMIC ATTITUDES

Control of the economic life of a colony is basic to colonial

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control. Some imperial nations do it harshly but the United States could be cited for the subtlety and uniqueness of its approach. For example, free trade was offered as a generous gift of American altruism. Concomitantly, the educational policy had to support this view and to soften the effects of the slowly tightening noose around the necks of the Filipinos. The economic motivations of the Americans in coming to the Philippines were not at all admitted to the Filipinos. As a matter of fact, from the first school-days under the soldier-teachers to the present, Philippine history books have portrayed America as a benevolent nation who came here only to save us from Spain and to spread amongst us the boons of liberty and democracy. The almost complete lack of understanding at present of those economic motivations and of the presence of American interests in the Philippines are the most eloquent testimony to the success of the education for colonials which we have undergone. What economic attitudes were fostered by American education?

It is interesting to note that during the times that the school attempts to inculcate an appreciation for things Philippine, the picture that is presented for the child's admiration is an idealized picture of a rural Philippines, as pretty and as unreal as an Amorsolo painting with its carabao, its smiling healthy farmer, the winsome barrio lass in the bright clean *pata-dyong*, and the sweet little nipa hut. That is the portrait of the Filipino that our education leaves in the minds of the young and it hurts the country in two ways.

First, it strengthens the belief (and we see this in adults) that the Philippines is essentially meant to be an agricultural country and we can not and should not change that. The result is an apathy toward industrialization. It is an idea they have not met in school. There is further, a fear, born out of

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that early stereotype of this country as an agricultural heaven, that industrialization is not good for us, that our national environment is not suited for an industrial economy, and that it will only bring social evils which will destroy the idyllic farm life.

Second, this idealized picture of farm life never emphasizes the poverty, the disease, the cultural vacuum, the sheer boredom, the superstition and ignorance of backward farm communities. Those who pursue higher education think of the farms as quaint places, good for an occasional vacation. Their life is rooted in the big towns and cities and there is no interest in revamping rural life because there is no understanding of its economic problems. Interest is limited to artesian wells and handicraft projects. Present efforts to uplift the conditions of the rural masses merely attack the peripheral problems without admitting the urgent need for basic agrarian reform.

With American education, the Filipinos were not only learning a new language; they were not only forgetting their own language; they were starting to become a new type of American. American ways were slowly being adopted. Our consumption habits were molded by the influx of cheap American goods that came in duty-free. The pastoral economy was extolled because this conformed with the colonial economy that was being fostered. Our books extolled the Western nations as peopled by superior beings because they were capable of manufacturing things that we never thought we were capable of producing. We were pleased by the fact that our raw material exports could pay for the American consumption goods that we had to import. Now we are used to these types of goods, and it is a habit we find hard to break, to the detriment of our own economy. We never thought that we too could industrialize because in school we were taught that we were

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primarily an agricultural country by geographical location and by the innate potentiality of our people. We were one with our fellow Asians in believing that we were not cut out for an industrialized economy. That is why before the war, we looked down upon goods made in Japan despite the fact that Japan was already producing commodities on par with the West. We could never believe that Japan, an Asian country, could attain the same superiority as America, Germany or England. And yet, it was "made-in-Japan" airplanes, battleships, and armaments that dislodged the Americans and the British from their positions of dominance during the second world war. This is the same attitude that has put us out of step with our Asian neighbors who already realize that colonialism has to be extirpated from their lives if they want to be free, prosperous, and happy.

## TRANSPLANTATION OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

American education in effect transplanted American political institutions and ideas into the Philippines. Senator Recto, in his last major address at the University of the Philippines, explained the reason for this. Speaking of political parties, Recto said:

It is to be deplored that our major political parties were born and nurtured before we had attained the status of a free democracy. The result was that they have come to be caricatures of their foreign model with its known characteristics — patronage, division of spoils, political bossism, partisan treatment of vital national issues. I say caricatures because of their chronic shortsightedness respecting those ultimate objectives the attainment of which was essential to a true and lasting national independence. All throughout the period of American colonization, they allowed themselves to become more and more the tools of colonial rule and less and less the interpreters of the people's will and ideals. Through their complacency, the new colonizer was able to

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fashion, in exchange for sufferance of oratorical complaints for independence, and for patronage, rank, and sinecure, a regime of his own choosing, for his own aims, and in his own self-interest.

The Americans were confronted with the dilemma of transplanting their political institutions and yet luring the Filipinos into a state of captivity. It was understandable for American authorities to think that democracy can only mean the American type of democracy, and thus they foisted on the Filipinos the institutions that were valid for their own people. Indigenous institutions which could have led to the evolution of native democratic ideas and institutions were disregarded. No wonder, we, too, look with hostility upon countries who try to develop their own political institutions according to the needs of their people without being bound by Western political procedures. We have been made to believe in certain political doctrines as absolute and the same for all peoples. An example of this is the belief in freedom of the press. Here, the consensus is that we cannot nationalize the press because it would be depriving foreigners of the exercise of freedom of the press. This may be valid for strong countries like the United States where there is no threat of foreign domination, but certainly, this is dangerous for an emergent nation like the Philippines where foreign control has yet to be weakened.

### RE-EXAMINATION DEMANDED

The new demands for economic emancipation and the assertion of our political sovereignty leave our educators no other choice but to re-examine their philosophy, their values, and their general approach to the making of the Filipino who will institute, support, and preserve the nationalist aims. To persist in the continuance of a system which was born under the exigencies of colonial rule, to be timid in the face of traditional

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opposition would only result in the evolution of an anomalous educational system which lags behind the urgent economic and political changes that the nation is experiencing. What then are the nationalist tasks for Philippine education?

Education must be seen not as an acquisition of information but as the making of man so that he may function most effectively and usefully within his own society. Therefore, education can not be divorced from the society of a definite country at a definite time. It is a fallacy to think that educational goals should be the same everywhere and that therefore what goes into the making of a well-educated American is the same as what should go into the making of the well-educated Filipino. This would be true only if the two societies were at the same political, cultural, and economic level and had the same political, cultural, and economic goals.

But what has happened in this country? Not only do we imitate Western education, we have patterned our education after the most technologically advanced Western nation. The gap between the two societies is very large. In fact, they are two entirely different societies with different goals.

### ADOPTION OF WESTERN VALUES

Economically, the U.S. is an industrial nation. It is a fully developed nation, economically speaking. Our country has a colonial economy with a tiny industrial base — in other words, we are backward and underdeveloped. Politically, the U.S. is not only master of its own house; its control and influence extends to many other countries all over the world. The Philippines has only lately emerged from formal colonial status and it still must complete its political and economic independence.

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Culturally, the U.S. has a vigorously and distinctively American culture. It is a nation whose cultural institutions have developed freely, indigenously, without control or direction from foreign sources, whose ties to its cultural past are clear and proudly celebrated because no foreign power has imposed upon its people a wholesale inferiority complex, because no foreign culture has been superimposed upon it destroying, distorting its own past and alienating the people from their own cultural heritage.

What are the characteristics of American education today which spring from its economic, political, and cultural status? What should be the characteristics of our own education as dictated by our own economic, political, and cultural conditions? To contrast both is to realize how inimical to our best interests and progress is our adoption of some of the basic characteristics and values of American education.

By virtue of its world leadership and its economic interests in many parts of the world, the United States has an internationalist orientation based securely on a well-grounded, long-held nationalistic viewpoint. U.S. education has no urgent need to stress the development of American nationalism in its young people. Economically, politically, culturally, the U.S. is master of its own house. American education, therefore, understandably lays little emphasis on the kind of nationalism we Filipinos need. Instead, it stresses internationalism and underplays nationalism. This sentiment is noble and good but when it is inculcated in a people who have either forgotten nationalism or never imbibed it, it can cause untold harm. The emphasis on world brotherhood, on friendship for other nations, without the firm foundation of nationalism which would give our people the feeling of pride in our own products and vigilance over our natural resources, has had very harmful results. Chief among these is the transformation of our na-

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tional virtue of hospitality into a stupid vice which hurts us and makes us the willing dupes of predatory foreigners.

### UN-FILIPINO FILIPINOS

Thus we complacently allow aliens to gain control of our economy. We are even proud of those who amass wealth in our country, publishing laudatory articles about their financial success. We love to hear foreigners call our country a paradise on earth, and we never stop to think that it is a paradise only for them but not for millions of our countrymen. When some of our more intellectually emancipated countrymen spearhead moves for nationalism, for nationalization of this or that endeavor, do the majority of Filipinos support such moves? No, there is apathy because there is no nationalism in our hearts which will spur us to protect and help our own countrymen first. Worse, some Filipinos even worry about the sensibilities of foreigners lest they think ill of us for supposedly discriminating against them. And worst of all, many Filipinos will even oppose nationalistic legislation either because they have become the willing servants of foreign interests or because, in their distorted view, we Filipinos can not progress without the help of foreign capital and foreign entrepreneurs.

In this part of the world, we are well nigh unique in our generally non-nationalistic outlook. What is the source of this shameful characteristic of ours? One important source is surely the schools. There is little emphasis on nationalism. Patriotism has been taught us, yes, but in general terms of love of country, respect for the flag, appreciation for the beauty of our countryside, and other similarly innocuous manifestations of our nationality.

The pathetic result of this failure of Philippine education is a citizenry amazingly naive and trusting in its relations with

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foreigners, devoid of the capacity to feel indignation even in the face of insults to the nation, ready to acquiesce and even to help aliens in the despoliation of our natural wealth. Why are the great majority of our people so complaisant about alien economic control? Much of the blame must be laid at the door of colonial education. Colonial education has not provided us with a realistic attitude toward other nations, especially Spain and the United States. The emphasis in our study of history has been on the great gifts that our conquerors have bestowed upon us. A mask of benevolence was used to hide the cruelties and deceit of early American occupation. The noble sentiments expressed by McKinley were emphasized rather than the ulterior motives of conquest. The myth of friendship and special relations is even now continually invoked to camouflage the continuing iniquities in our relationship. Nurtured in this kind of education, the Filipino mind has come to regard centuries of colonial status as a grace from above rather than as a scourge. Is it any wonder then that having regained our independence we have forgotten how to defend it? Is it any wonder that when leaders like Claro M. Recto try to teach us how to be free, the great majority of the people find it difficult to grasp those nationalistic principles that are the staple food of other Asian minds? The American architects of our colonial education really labored shrewdly and well.

### THE LANGUAGE PROBLEM

The most vital problem that has plagued Philippine education has been the question of language. Today, experiments are still going on to find out whether it would be more effective to use the native language. This is indeed ridiculous since an individual cannot be more at home in any other language than his own. In every sovereign country, the use of its

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own language in education is so natural no one thinks it could be otherwise. But here, so great has been our disorientation caused by our colonial education that the use of our own language is a controversial issue, with more Filipinos against than in favor! Again, as in the economic field Filipinos believe they cannot survive without America, so in education we believe no education can be true education unless it is based on proficiency in English.

Rizal already foresaw the tragic effects of a colonial education when, speaking through Simoun, he said:

You ask for equal rights, the Hispanization of your customs, and you don't see that what you are begging for is suicide, the destruction of your nationality, the annihilation of your fatherland, the consecration of tyranny! What will you be in the future? A people without character, a nation without liberty—everything you have will be borrowed, even your very defects! . . . . What are you going to do with Castilian, the few of you who will speak it? Kill off your own originality, subordinate your thoughts to other brains, and instead of freeing yourselves, make yourselves slaves indeed! Nine-tenths of those of you who pretend to be enlightened are renegades to your country! He among you who talks that language neglects his own in such a way that he neither writes it nor understands it, and how many have I not seen who pretended not to know a single word of it!

It is indeed unfortunate that teaching in the native language is given up to second grade only, and the question of whether beyond this it should be English or Pilipino is still unsettled. Many of our educational experts have written on the language problem, but there is an apparent timidity on the part of these experts to come out openly for the urgent need of discarding the foreign language as the medium of instruction in spite of remarkable results shown by the use of the native language. Yet, the deleterious effects of using English as the medium of instruction are many and serious. What Rizal said about Spanish has been proven to be equally true for English.



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### BARRIER TO DEMOCRACY

Under the system maintained by Spain in the Philippines, educational opportunities were so limited that learning became the possession of a chosen few. This enlightened group was called the *ilustrados*. They constituted the elite. Most of them came from the wealthy class because this was the only class that could afford to send its sons abroad to pursue higher learning. Learning, therefore, became a badge of privilege. There was a wide gap between the *ilustrados* and the masses. Of course, many of the *ilustrados* led the propaganda movement, but they were mostly reformers who wanted reforms within the framework of Spanish colonialism. In a way, they were also captives of Spanish education. Many of them were the first to capitulate to the Americans, and the first leaders of the Filipinos during the early years of the American regime came from this class. Later they were supplanted by the products of American education.

One of the ostensible reasons for imposing English as the medium of instruction was the fact that English was the language of democracy, that through this tongue the Filipinos would imbibe the American way of life which makes no distinction between rich and poor and which gives everyone equal opportunities. Under this thesis, the existence of an *ilustrado* class would not long endure because all Filipinos would be enlightened and educated. There would be no privileged class. In the long run, however, English perpetuated the existence of the *ilustrados* — American *ilustrados* who, like their counterparts, were strong supporters of the way of life of the new motherland.

Now we have a small group of men who can articulate their thoughts in English, a wider group who can read and speak in fairly comprehensible English and a great mass that

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hardly expresses itself in this language. All of these groups are hardly articulate in their native tongues because of the neglect of our native dialects, if not the deliberate attempts to prevent their growth.

The result is a leadership that fails to understand the needs of the masses because it is a leadership that can communicate with the masses only in general and vague terms. This is one reason why political leadership remains in a vacuum. This is the reason why issues are never fully discussed. This is the reason why orators with the best inflections, demagogues who rant and rave, are the ones that flourish in the political arena. English has created a barrier between the monopolists of power and the people. English has become a status symbol, while the native tongues are looked down upon. English has given rise to a bifurcated society of fairly educated men and the masses who are easily swayed by them. A clear evidence of the failure of English education is the fact that politicians address the masses in their dialects. Lacking mastery of the dialect, the politicians merely deal in generalities.

Because of their lack of command of English, the masses have gotten used to only half-understanding what is said to them in English. They appreciate the sounds without knowing the sense. This is a barrier to democracy. People don't even think it is their duty to know, or that they are capable of understanding national problems. Because of the language barrier, therefore, they are content to leave everything to their leaders. This is one of the root causes of their apathy, their regionalism or parochialism. Thus, English which was supposedly envisioned as the language of democracy is in our country a barrier to the full flowering of democracy.

In 1924 the eminent scholar, Najib Saleeby, wrote on the language of education in the Philippines. He deplored the at-

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tempt to impose English as the medium of instruction. Saleeby, who was an expert on the Malayo-Polynesian languages, showed that Tagalog, Visayan, Ilocano, and other Philippine dialects belong to the same linguistic tree. He said:

The relation the Tagalog holds to the Bisaya or to the Sulu is very much like or closer than that of the Spanish to the Italian. An educated Tagalog from Batangas, and an educated Bisayan from Cebu can learn to understand each other in a short space of time and without much effort. A Cebu student living in Manila can acquire practical use and good understanding of Tagalog in less than three months. The relation between Tagalog and Malay is very much the same as that of Spanish and French.

This was said 42 years ago when Tagalog movies, periodicals, radio programs had not yet attained the popularity that they enjoy today all over the country.

Saleeby further states:

Empirically neither the Spanish nor the English could be a suitable medium for public instruction in the Philippine Islands. It does not seem possible that either of them can become the common or national language of the Archipelago. Three centuries of Spanish rule and education failed to check use of the vernacular. A very small minority of Filipinos could speak Spanish in 1898, but the great mass of the people could neither use nor understand it. Twenty-five years of intensive English education has produced no radical change. More people at present speak English than Spanish, but the great majority hold on to the local dialect. The Spanish policy might be partially justified on colonial and financial grounds, but the American policy cannot be so defended. It should receive popular free choice, or give proof of its practicability by showing actual and satisfactory results. The people have as yet had no occasion to declare their free will, and the present policy must be judged on its own merits and on conclusive evidence... But teaching English broadcast and enforcing its official use is one thing, and its adoption as the basis of education and as the sole medium of public instruction is a completely different matter. This point cannot be fully grasped or comprehended without special attention and experience in colonial education and administration. Such policy is exalted and ambitious to an extreme degree.

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It aims at something unknown before in human affairs. It is attempting to do what ancient Persia, Rome, Alexander the Great and Napoleon failed to accomplish. It aims at nothing less than the obliteration of the tribal differences of the Filipinos, the substitution of English for the vernacular dialects as a home tongue, and making English the national, common language of the Archipelago.

This is more true today. Very few college students can speak except in mixed English and the dialect. Our Congress has compounded their confusion by a completely unwarranted imposition of 24 units of Spanish.

### IMPEDIMENTS TO THOUGHT

A foreign language is an impediment to instruction. Instead of learning directly through the native tongue, a child has first to master a foreign tongue, memorize its vocabulary, get accustomed to its sounds, intonations, accents, just to discard the language later when he is out of school. This does not mean that foreign languages should not be taught. Foreign languages should be taught and can be taught more easily after one has mastered his own tongue.

Even if the Americans were motivated by the sincere desire of unifying the country through the means of a common tongue, the abject results of instruction in English through the six decades of American education should have awakened our educators to the fact that the learning process has been disrupted by the imposition of a foreign language. From 1935, when the Institute of National Language was organized, very feeble attempts have been made to abandon the use of English as a medium of instruction. Our educators seem constantly to avoid the subject of language, in spite of the clear evidence of rampant ignorance among the products of the present educational system. This has resulted in the denial of

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education to a vast number of children who after the primary grades no longer continue schooling. In spite of the fact that the national language today is understood all over the country, no one is brave enough to advocate its use as the medium of instruction. There is the constant argument that new expenditures, new efforts in the publication of new textbooks will be required. There are arguments about the dearth of materials in the national language, but these are feeble arguments that merely disguise the basic opposition of our educational leaders to the use of what is native. Thus the products of the Philippine educational system, barring very few exceptions, are Filipinos who do not have a mastery of English because it is foreign, and who do not have a mastery of their native tongue because of the deliberate neglect of those responsible for the education of the citizens of the nation.

A foreign tongue as a medium of instruction constitutes an impediment to learning and to thinking because a student first has to master new sounds, new inflections, and new sentence constructions. His innermost thoughts find difficulty of expression, and lack of expression in turn prevents the further development of thought. Thus we find in our society a deplorable lack of serious thinking among great sections of the population. We half understand books and periodicals written in English. We find it an ordeal to communicate with each other through a foreign medium, and yet we have so neglected our native language that we find ourselves at a loss in expressing ourselves in this language.

Language is a tool of the thinking process. Through language, thought develops, and the development of thought leads to the further development of language. But when a language becomes a barrier to thought, the thinking process is impeded or retarded and we have the resultant cultural stagnation. Creative thinking, analytic thinking, abstract thinking are not

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fostered because the foreign language makes the student prone to memorization. Because of the mechanical process of learning, he is able to get only a general idea but not a deeper understanding. So, the tendency of students is to study in order to be able to answer correctly and to pass the examinations and thereby earn the required credits. Independent thinking is smothered because the language of learning ceases to be the language of communication outside the classroom. A student is mainly concerned with the acquisition of information. He is seldom able to utilize this information for deepening his understanding of his society's problems.

Our Institute of National Language is practically neglected. It should be one of the main pillars of an independent country. Our educators are wary about proposing the immediate adoption of the national language as the medium of instruction because of what they consider as opposition of other language groups. This is indicative of our colonial mentality. Our educators do not see any opposition to the use of a foreign language but fear opposition to the use of the national language just because it is based on one of the main dialects. The fact that one can be understood in any part of the Philippines through the national language, the fact that periodicals in the national language and local movies have a mass following all over the islands, shows that, given the right support, the national language would take its proper place.

Language is the main problem, therefore. Experience has shown that children who are taught in their native tongue learn more easily and better than those taught in English. Records of the Bureau of Public Schools will support this. But mere teaching in the national language is not enough. There are other areas that demand immediate attention.

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Philippine history must be rewritten from the point of view of the Filipino. Our economic problems must be presented in the light of nationalism and independence. These are only some of the problems that confront a nationalist approach to education. Government leadership and supervision are essential. Our educators need the support of legislators in this regard. In this connection, the private sector has also to be strictly supervised.

### THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Before the second world war, products of the Philippine public school system looked down upon their counterparts in the private schools. It is generally accepted that graduates of the public schools at that time were superior to the products of the private institutions in point of learning. There were exclusive private institutions but these were reserved for the well-to-do. These schools did not necessarily reflect superiority of instruction. But they reflected superiority of social status.

Among students of the public schools, there was still some manifestation of concern for national problems. Vestiges of the nationalistic tradition of our revolution remained in the consciousness of those parents who had been caught in the mainstream of the rebellion, and these were passed on to the young. On the other hand, apathy to national problems was marked among the more affluent private school students whose families had readily accepted American rule.

Today, public schools are looked down upon. Only the poor send their children to these schools. Those who can afford it, or those who have social pretensions, send their children to private institutions. The result has been a boom in private education, a boom that unfortunately has seen the proliferation

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of diploma mills. There were two concomitant tendencies that went with this trend. First was the commercialization of education. A lowering of standards resulted because of the inadequate facilities of the public schools and the commercialization in the private sector. It is a well known fact that classes in many private schools are packed and teachers are overloaded in order to maximize profits. Second, some private schools which are owned and operated by foreigners and whose social science courses are handled by aliens flourished. While foreigners may not be anti-Filipino, they definitely cannot be nationalistic in orientation. They think as foreigners and as private interests. Thus the proliferation of private schools and the simultaneous deterioration of public schools have resulted not only in lower standards but also in a definitely un-Filipino education.

Some years ago, there was a move to grant curricular freedom to certain qualified private institutions as well as wider leeway for self-regulation. This was a retrograde step. It is true that this move was in answer to charges that state supervision would enhance regimentation. But in a country that is just awakening to nationalist endeavors, it is the duty of a nationalist administration to see to it that the molding of minds is safely channelled along nationalist lines. The autonomy of private institutions may be used to subvert nationalist sentiments especially when ownership of schools and handling of social sciences are not yet Filipinized. Autonomy of private institutions would only dilute nationalist sentiments either by foreign subversion or by commercialization.

### OTHER EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

While the basic defect in the educational system has been responsible for the lack of nationalist ideals, there are other

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media and facilities that negate whatever gains are made in some sectors of the educational field. The almost unilateral source of news, films, and other cultural materials tends to distort our perspective. American films and comics, American press services, fellowships in America, have all contributed to the almost total Americanization of our attitudes. A distinct Filipino culture cannot prevail if an avalanche of western cultural materials suffocates our relatively puny efforts in this direction.

### NEEDED: FILIPINOS

The education of the Filipino must be a Filipino education. It must be based on the needs of the nation and the goals of the nation. The object is not merely to produce men and women who can read and write or who can add and subtract. The primary object is to produce a citizenry that appreciates and is conscious of its nationhood and has national goals for the betterment of the community, and not an anarchic mass of people who know how to take care of themselves only. Our students hear of Rizal and Bonifacio but are their teachings related to our present problems or do they merely learn of anecdotes and incidents that prove interesting to the child's imagination?

We have learned to use American criteria for our problems and we look at our prehistory and our past with the eyes of a visitor. A lot of information is learned but attitudes are not developed. The proper regard for things Philippine, the selfish concern over the national fate — these are not at all imbedded in the consciousness of students. Children and adolescents go to school to get a certificate or diploma. They try to learn facts but the patriotic attitude is not acquired because of too much emphasis on forms.

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What should be the basic objective of education in the Philippines? Is it merely to produce men and women who can read and write? If this is the only purpose, then education is directionless. Education should first of all assure national survival. No amount of economic and political policy can be successful if the educational program does not imbue prospective citizens with the proper attitudes that will ensure the implementation of these goals and policies. Philippine educational policies should be geared to the making of Filipinos. These policies should see to it that schools produce men and women with minds and attitudes that are attuned to the needs of the country.

Under previous colonial regimes, education saw to it that the Filipino mind was subservient to that of the master. The foreign overlords were esteemed. We were not taught to view them objectively, seeing their virtues as well as their faults. This led our citizens to form a distorted opinion of the foreign masters and also of themselves. The function of education now is to correct this distortion. We must now think of ourselves, of our salvation, of our future. And unless we prepare the minds of the young for this endeavor, we shall always be a pathetic people with no definite goals and no assurance of preservation.

## OUR CAPTIVE MINDS\*

ALTHOUGH MANY AMONG US REFUSE TO ADMIT IT, OUR LIFE as a nation and even as individuals is dominated economically, culturally, and intellectually by America and the Americans. In all honesty, we must acknowledge that certain political and social institutions and habits of life have been favorably influenced by American colonization of our country. However, we have also been subjected, perhaps with greater intensity, to the excesses, the superfluities, the vices, and the inanities of the American world. And instead of rejecting these influences that are either harmful or clearly incompatible with our economic status or our social history, we have swallowed the bad and the good with fine impartiality. Instead of holding fast to our national identity, we worked assiduously at the ridiculous job of turning ourselves into little Americans.

Our history reveals that the Filipino people were inspired by a feeling of nationality so intense that they fought fiercely against all who invaded their shores. When did we change? How did we lose our nationalist fervor? How did our minds and our spirits become the willing captives of America?

### PROPHETIC ADVICE

Our search for the influences that shaped the captive mind of the twentieth-century Filipino must start with a little-known statement made on July 26, 1899:

\**This Week*, Manila Chronicle, January 6, 1957

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You have been frank with me. I will be as frank with you. First, you must keep the islands . . . because . . . your national honor is involved; because it is to your interest, not at once but greatly almost incontestably so in the future . . . From what you say, I think self-government is out of the question, and even their participation in your government should be regulated and limited with great caution.

As to the form of government, you should have a Governor General of great ability, firmness, and purity. Under him, sub-officials of the districts all appointed by the superiors and not chosen by the people. You should employ the ablest natives in the islands in the Government service in some way, so as to enlist them on your side. The courts are the most important consideration of all. You will make a mistake if you put natives in charge of the courts. Don't do it. That may come later but not now. They must be given minor military positions, but not important ones. Don't do too much for them at the beginning — do it gradually as the years go by.

Now in Formosa we have adopted practically this system and it is working well. There was difficulty at first, and that is necessary, but things are beginning to move well.

As to your present situation, I think your course is clear, most clear. Don't treat with them until you definitely defeat them. First you must do that. You cannot treat and fight. Of course, make the English language the language of courts and schools and everything else. Do away with the court interpreters as soon as may be. After a while, when the people have sent their children to America to be educated, all things will be much better.

Let me impress upon you the necessity of conferring your benefits upon them gradually. If you give them too much, they cannot appreciate or understand or rightly use them, and they will thus be thrown away. But if you give them the blessings of free institutions gradually, you furnish a source of constant gratitude. In the other way you exhaust yourselves at the beginning.

Prophetic words these, describing Philippine history since 1900 in a nutshell. The Speaker: Marquis Ito, Prime Minister of Japan. His interested listener: American Senator Albert J. Beveridge, eloquent orator of the expansionist bloc of the



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Republican Party, who had just arrived in Tokyo from the frontlines in the Philippines.

### CONQUEST BY ACQUIESCENCE

Marquis Ito's recommendations, with which Beveridge was in complete agreement, advanced, quite simply, the philosophy of the new colonialism. It established itself by force of arms as Spain did, but instead of retaining control by repression, it chose a more effective method which guaranteed lasting results. By vigorous economic, cultural, and intellectual "assimilation," it undermined the separate identity of the conquered nation. Conquest by force was transformed into conquest by acquiescence. The people identified themselves with their conquerors; their intellectual captivity was complete.

Whether the advice of Marquis Ito was consciously followed or not cannot be ascertained. However, certain parallels with early American policy may be discerned. Senator Beveridge's Republican Party was then in control of the government and a Republican was President. Following the decision to keep the islands, President McKinley's program of "benevolent assimilation" was soon launched. An American Governor was appointed. American political control was assured, with the Americans firmly holding the reins of government aided by junior officials from among the ranks of trusted Filipinos. These were appointed from above, rather than elected by the people. The chosen few, thus, felt grateful and favorably contrasted American colonial policy with that of the Spaniards. It is interesting to note that the first Filipinos chosen to help the Americans govern came from the ranks of the Partido Federal, which was the first political party organized during the Amer-

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ican regime. This party advocated the acceptance of American sovereignty and ultimate statehood in the American Union.

Subsequently, there was a gradual grant of powers, although initially franchise was given only to about four per cent of the population. That Marquis Ito was blessed with singular foresight is proved by our almost pathetic expressions of gratitude whenever some rights which fully belonged to us as a people were granted as special privileges. Because so-called benefits were granted piecemeal, we appreciated them more.

Although at first there was local opposition to the tying up of the Philippine economy with that of the United States, the latter was able to establish a system of economic relations which, until the present, remains substantially the same. Again paralleling Ito's suggestions, at the outset English became the medium of instruction and the official language of government and commerce.

Of course, neither Marquis Ito nor those who thought like him in the American government deserve the entire credit for our complete domination, not only politically and economically but intellectually and morally as well. The truth is that we were ripe for conquest. American control was achieved with comparative ease because of our past history of domination. For three centuries, the Spanish colonizer tried to break our spirit with a regime of oppression and tyranny. American rule, though it had its own ways of asserting dominance, was naturally mild by comparison and, therefore, easier to accept. Then, too, the colonial policies of the more stable American government offered our nationalists a clearer outlook than the erratic policies of the Spanish government which before the turn of the century changed from reactionary to liberal and back again, depending on the changes at the court. Further-

more, America was a rising nation economically and prestige-wise, whereas Spain was decadent, no longer a major power.

However, our desire for freedom was still strong, and despite the relative leniency of American occupation, our people did not give up their struggle for independence. Of course, in certain sectors, the nationalistic spirit was losing strength as we became more and more dependent economically on the United States. Just before the outbreak of the second world war, we stood on the threshold of independence with America secure in the belief that though we would attain political freedom we were by then so strongly influenced by her occupation that we would remain not only her staunch ally but a willing subordinate as well.

Then came the excesses of Japanese occupation. So brutal was their treatment of us that we actually longed for the American yoke. This rendered our post-war nationalism much weaker and more anemic in its few manifestations. We became so enamored of our GI liberators that the stage was reached when people felt they had to apologize for any expressions of nationalism lest they be accused of ingratitude.

### CULTURAL AMERICANIZATION

Hand in hand with America's political and economic policies came the effective cultural Americanization of a people whose native culture was already in a state of disintegration because of Castilian repressive rule. It proved easy for the Americans to disseminate their culture because as a people we were already an uprooted race. Thus English quickly became the accepted language of government, commerce, and education. It merely supplanted Spanish, another foreign language. As for the native dialects, they had lost their prestige and acceptance among the cultural leaders of the native population

who used to express themselves in Spanish and now avidly took up English.

Whereas the Spaniards in general were averse to spreading Spanish culture in the islands, the Americans were active in bringing their civilization to our country. That it was alien, in many respects, to our ways of living and thinking was not considered. In effect, the development of our indigenous culture was negated in two ways: (1) by suppression under the Spaniards and, (2) by substitution under the Americans. The Spanish way engendered in our people a feeling of rebellion, but the American way was readily accepted, precisely because we had been suffering from cultural starvation.

Four factors have been, and still are, largely responsible for the shaping of our life as a people, aside, of course, from our economic dependence on the United States. These are:

1. The imposition of the English language
2. Our American-oriented educational system
3. The American news services, magazines, and movies
4. The Americans who have come to live among us

### SEEING WITH AMERICAN EYES

The imposition of the English language was the opening wedge to our cultural domination. With English as the medium of instruction, our young people fell under the spell of America. With the language barrier disposed of and the system of education oriented to American practices, American standards and values became an important part of our intellectual make-up. Through the language and the educational system, the Filipinos became almost a part of America. We studied her history, knew the exploits of her heroes by heart. With the language, too, came a veritable flood of written

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materials. American press services and periodicals have generously fed us with information gathered by Americans and evaluated by them in terms of their standards, their scale of values, and their interests. So effective and all-inclusive is this avalanche of information that, without hardly being aware of it, we have been seeing the world through American eyes.

American movies have had an even more pervasive influence. They have brought American ways and attitudes, music and dances, fads in food, drink, and dress, idiosyncrasies of speech, behavior towards family and friends, problems of juvenile delinquency and crime. It may be said without exaggeration that American movies constitute the greatest single influence on Philippine social life.

These three factors contributing to our Americanization are concretized in the fourth influence — the Americans who have come to live among us and have found opulence in our shores. We look up to them, we ape them. They set the mode.

Our past history of oppression, America's policies and techniques of colonization, our own gullibility and loss of racial pride, have all contributed to make us a people seldom able to think for ourselves.

### THINKING IN INSTALLMENTS

How does this captive mind manifest itself in our national and individual life? We are overdependent on America in all lines of endeavor. Consequently, we have failed to develop independent, serious, and solid thinking on matters of national concern. We have gotten so used to following and copying that we often fail to consider local problems in terms of our peculiar needs. We have acquired the habit of thinking in

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installments, because, conscious of American reaction, we tentatively start a project or enunciate half a policy, and then wait for American consent or approval before we can pursue our thinking and planning further. Our thinking, therefore, is not only unoriginal but also subsidiary. This subsidiary thinking on our part has paradoxically aroused in us the need to look important, to play the role of little Americans in this part of the world. As a people we are smug. We assume and we claim proudly that we are the only Christian nation in this part of the world. We feel that we are the most civilized people in Asia, when by civilized we actually mean Westernized. The two terms are not necessarily synonymous, especially when we consider that Westernization for us means the acquisition of American habits and attitudes rather than that technological development which is the crowning achievement of the American world.

### SALESMAN CIVILIZATION

Because we are oriented towards America, our relations with our fellow Orientals are superficial. Since they are not the products of America, we look down upon them and have adopted the Messianic pose of leading them when in reality they have produced, in the past and in contemporary times, men of world renown with solid accomplishments. Our behavior is also traceable to the fact that being products of America's salesman civilization we rely on propaganda and make ourselves felt not for our merits but because of self-advertisement. Our ability in this field is proved by the fact that gullible Americans themselves have made heroes of little men from the Philippines whose exploits on the platform have earned for them a reputation well beyond their intrinsic merits.

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## FOUNDATION OF NATIONAL CONFUSION

While newly independent neighboring nations have been trying to work out their own domestic and foreign policies in terms of their best interests, we, as a nation, are paralyzed by fear, blinded by our admiration for America, and confused about our national goals. We have not yet made any distinction between the merely formal fact of independence and the substantial changes that independence should have brought. We believe ourselves independent although the same economic relations exist and the same cultural domination persists.

With the liquidation of the question of independence, we are floundering on issues that we can no longer comprehend because, though they are no less grave, they are not as dramatic as our former agitation for political emancipation. We are floundering because we have failed to dissociate our problems from those of America's. This unfortunate situation arises out of the fact that we are equating America's national interest with ours. Consciously or not, we have transformed the phrase, "follow America," into the cornerstone of both our national and international life. This is the foundation of our national confusion. This has prevented us from pursuing anything independently, because to do so would be considered anti-American and, therefore, against our own national interests. Unfortunately, the assumption is securely lodged in high places.

Every time a problem arises, the first consideration is, how will the Americans regard this, how will this affect Philippine-American relations? It is truly unfortunate that at a time when the global fight between communism and democracy, because of nuclear deterrents, has moved away from military conflict to the realm of economic competition, thus making it easier for the emergent peoples of the world to develop independently, we are the only ones giving up that chance.

We are content to develop in the shadow of America because our captive minds regard the United States as a big brother ever ready to protect us and even to support us out of pure goodwill and affection. Whereas we can readily believe that France and Britain or India or any other nation would, in dealing with us, place their own interests above ours, we do not think that America will do the same — not towards us, her favorite ally, anyway. There is this one blind spot in our thinking. Our inability to consider the United States as a nation just like any other has had both grave and ludicrous consequences.

For example, in any sort of negotiation with the United States, we enter the ring like a boxer with one hand tied behind his back. This handicap that we impose on ourselves is our assumption that we are facing, not a nation seeking what is best for herself, but a quixotic adversary gallantly seeking what is best for us. It is, therefore, easy to persuade us into believing that some action which is best for America is actually best for us. Only when the issues of self-interest stand nakedly clear, as in the bases question, do we painfully realize that our benevolent brother is thinking first of himself. Our expression of hurt surprise at this natural and normal behavior of America is evidence of our idealized and unrealistic view of our former conquerors.

Another example of our idealized concept of America may be found in the aggrieved tone we take when commenting on the fact that our erstwhile enemy, Japan, has received more aid than a faithful ally like us. That we are hurt by this, that we can even think of complaining about it in the tone of a neglected sweetheart, is proof of our ridiculous naivete about the United States. The United States, in aiding Japan more than the Philippines, was acting in her best interests. Japan's geographical position, industrial capacity, and military poten-

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tial would make her an infinitely more effective ally against Russia than the Philippines. The trouble with us is that we think sentimental considerations shape American foreign policies the way they do ours.

### AMERICAN ECONOMIC CONTROL

Our unquestioning acceptance of anything American has wrought havoc on our economy. We have acquired economic tastes well beyond our material means. This, of course, means the excessive importation of American manufactured products. Our consumption habits are American, and we look with condescension, if not with disdain, on local products. But to a very important extent, we have remained importers because, while culturally we yearn for American-type commodities, we are prevented from acquiring the "know-how" and the means of making most of these products at home because of the nature of our economic relations with America.

It has often been claimed that there has been no undue economic pressure on the Philippines because American investments here have totalled only about one per cent of America's total foreign investments, and trade between America and the Philippines before the war was only three to four per cent of America's total foreign trade. If we were considering Philippine influence on American affairs, these figures would suffice to show this influence to be negligible. Neither do these investments greatly affect American world policy in general. However, we are concerned with the effect of these investments on American policy toward the Philippines and Philippine policy toward the United States. That these supposedly small American investments here wield great influence on both the United States and the Philippine government is shown by two related facts: that the United States government was able to

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make us grant parity rights to her citizens, and that we amended our constitution for the sole purpose of granting these rights. Moreover, these American investors and traders who benefit from their country's Philippine policy are the same people who are looked up to in Philippine society—the people we ape, the people whose opinions our captive minds value too highly. Therefore, though their economic might already gives them a pervasive political and cultural influence, our gullibility makes this influence even wider in scope and more weighty than it should be.

### ORIENTAL AMERICANS

Our educational system suffers in like manner from our captive mentality. The products of our schools are becoming more and more half-baked. It is heartening to note that certain educational circles have realized that our one big problem is language. At present, the student has to grapple with a strange language before he can use it as a medium. The struggle with the language becomes, in most cases, the prime preoccupation of the student, to the detriment of his learning process. Moreover, the teacher himself, in trying to instruct the student, is using an alien tongue and, therefore, finds great difficulty in transmitting knowledge. It is again our great reverence for things American that prevents us from taking vigorous steps towards the development and use of Pilipino as our medium of instruction. It was only recently that changes in our curriculum put some emphasis on the study of Philippine life and institutions. A great many of our generation learned in school too little about their own land and studied textbooks which dealt with things Philippine using American yardsticks and American viewpoints. Teachers, too, like government officials, often apply to local situations what they

learned from textbooks with Western orientation. There is little effort on their part to think things through as Filipinos. It is infinitely easier to turn immediately to Western stereotypes or formulae.

The manifestations of our Americanization in the social field are even more striking, and also more ridiculous. Because of our obsession with English, we have neglected our own dialects. In the so-called educated families, English is used within the family and the dialect is reserved for communication with the servants. How proudly the fond parents recount their children's progress in English and how frightened they are of the growing popularity of Tagalog! Even families who use their dialects at home make an effort to keep up with the Joneses by using English in public. This lack of appreciation for our own dialects has made us strangers to our literary and musical past. Few of us know our epics, our folk tales, our folk songs and dances. Instead, we have become the ardent exponents of American jazz and American dances. We are proud to claim that we can play American jazz and dance better than the Americans themselves.

Local movies merely extend the influence of American movies. Though they use Tagalog or Visayan, they often take their plots from American movies and project stereotypes of the Filipino family, the boy and his sweetheart, and the teenager that have a distinctly American flavor. Come to think of it, the phenomenon of the teenager is itself distinctly American, and our teenage gangs are carbon copies of their American counterparts. Even our standards of beauty and achievement have to find an American reference point. Thus we call a pretty girl the Elizabeth Taylor of the Philippines, a local singer, the Johnnie Ray of the Philippines. Current beauty contests insist on the standard American dimensions of pulchritude. Even our

traditional Filipino hospitality has been greatly simplified by the ubiquitously advertised American soft drinks which have become indispensable items of the Filipino home.

## ASSIMILATE RATHER THAN BE ASSIMILATED

Many more examples can be cited to show our mental captivity. That this captivity is impeding our development as a nation and is, therefore, against our best interests should be abundantly clear. There is no attempt here to suggest that everything foreign is bad and should be shunned. But certainly we should assimilate rather than be assimilated. We should choose what we want to absorb, carefully and seriously. But before we can do this, we must find ourselves, re-establish continuity with our own past history and culture, gain status in our own eyes as a distinct people, and re-evaluate our achievements and potentialities. Above all, we must concretely establish our national goals and re-assess our relations with the rest of the world—especially with the United States on one hand and with our Asian neighbors on the other. If any aspect of our relations impedes the realization of our goals, then these relations must be adjusted. Our relations must be adjusted to our goals and not our goals to these relations.

Because our mental captivity springs from our relations with America, these relations must constitute the starting point of our national re-assessment. Let us begin by learning to view America realistically. The following are some points we must fix in our minds:

First, the United States, like any other country, bases her policies on what is best for her as a nation. There is nothing wrong with that. In our relations with America we must bear this constantly in mind and likewise act to further our own interest.

Second, if we need America, she needs us, too. If we benefited from her occupation of our country, she derived benefits as well. If she liberated us from the Japanese, Bataan and Corregidor helped her gain time for her offensive. If she is aiding us economically, her businessmen are also reaping fruits from this financial aid.

Third, an alliance between the Philippines and America based on equality and respect for each other's right to independent action will, in the long run, be better for America than our present subservient attitude. Many responsible Americans themselves realize that our subservient attitude is damaging to the democratic prestige of their country. Let us not feel that some disagreement with America resulting in independent action on our part, is a terrible ingratitude.

Fourth, the continuation of our economic dependence on the United States will be harmful to us in the long run.

These revisions in our thinking should be the first steps in our struggle to free our captive minds. When we have taken the first steps, it will be easy to re-evaluate the effects of American civilization on our own cultural development. Bolstered by a feeling of equality, a sense of our own worth as a separate people, we can choose what to assimilate and what to discard from the civilizations of both Asia and the Western world.

## *VARIATIONS ON A THEME*



## THE CORRUPT SOCIETY\*

CORRUPTION IS NOT MERELY A DISEASE OF OUR GOVERNMENT. Corruption is a chronic malady of our society. There is a tendency today to view corruption as a phenomenon only of governmental function. This attempt to delimit the range of corruption to the governmental field and to ascribe to it the present plight of the country tends to obscure the real cause of our backwardness and poverty. Are we backward because we are corrupt? Or is there a more basic reason for our economic poverty? Is corruption the cause or is it merely an effect? The attempt to make corruption the primary problem of our national life seeks to make us forget the real cause of our degradation and of our apparently inherent propensity for corrupt activities.

### THE VICIOUS CIRCLE

Daily, in the halls of congress, through the printed word and over the airwaves, our politicians and our civic leaders expose, denounce, or deplore this or that government anomaly. During election time the principal issue is always graft and corruption. No wonder public concern is almost exclusively centered on malfeasance in government. But with every change of administration, the problem only becomes aggravated. The panaceas and the grandiose promises fizzle out. The accusers become the accused; the halo of righteousness changes heads. The list of dishonor is different but corruption remains the

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\**Sunday Times Magazine*, August 10, 1958

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same. Graft and corruption persist, like a cancer gnawing at our entrails, showing no signs of abatement and consigning us to a state of helplessness and hopelessness.

### EFFECT NOT CAUSE

Not all the oratorical imprecations hurled against graft and corruption by professional paragons of honesty will change the facts one whit. And we shall continue knocking our heads against the wall as long as we fail to recognize two facts:

1. That government graft is only a part of the larger corruption of our corrupt society; and
2. That this corruption (both the general evil and its particular governmental manifestation) is not the cause of our other problems but the consequence of a fundamental defect in our national life.

Let us first learn to recognize the various faces of corruption.

### THE GREATEST CORRUPTION OF ALL

Closely related to wrong-doing in government is the correspondingly corrupt attitude of our people towards official morality. Perhaps the most frightening sign of all is the blithe matter-of-fact acceptance of evil. We might even go so far as to say that the greatest corruption of all is this general acceptance of corruption. Padre Florentino in Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* summarizes this terrible truth for us: "An immoral government presupposes a demoralized people, a conscienceless administration, greedy and servile citizens in the settled parts, outlaws and brigands in the mountains. Like master, like slave! Like government, like country!"

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We are demoralized. In our attitude towards government, we exhibit a distorted sense of values. We regard law lightly, and instinctively think of ways and means of circumventing it. We even suspect that sometimes the makers of laws and their enforcers, before the enactment of these laws, have already put in or found convenient loopholes. Does this disgust us? Does it fill us with righteous indignation? No. Instead, many among us feel admiration for the clever rascals. We envy them their opportunities and we wish we had their audacity. When we meet them socially, do we ostracize them? Do we show our disapproval by shunning their company? No, we bow and we scrape; we smile and we praise. Their lack of scruples has made them rich and powerful, so we are servile and obsequious in their presence. Quite a few of us seek them out, greedily hoping that powerful connections may result in a bonanza for our pockets.

### MODERN BRIGANDS

Our acceptance of corruption extends even to the petty government employee, for we accept as standard procedure the necessity of greasing palms whenever we do business with our government. The few who miraculously retain the capacity to be scandalized by corruption are considered naive, Quixotic, impractical gentlemen of the old school, unsuited to the modern world. Unlike Padre Florentino, we need not scour mountains for our modern brigands and outlaws. Our own attitude towards government and laws is curiously similar to that of the outlaw. Anything goes as long as we don't get caught. A little larceny never hurts anyone. If I don't do it, someone else will. If I don't help myself, no one else will.

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### WE GET WHAT WE DESERVE

Our matter-of-fact acceptance of corruption is nowhere more evident than in the conduct of our elections. We affirm as an elementary truth the proposition that only a man with money should run for office because no one will work for him unless he can give out the pesos (and sometimes the dollars). There is corruption, too, in the idea that a vote for a candidate is a favor granted him and not an exercise of the right of choice. The validity of party platforms, the examination of a candidate's views, and the consideration of basic issues, seldom play an important part in the voter's choice. He is cowed down by a show of strength and wealth.

One of the most pathetic pictures of corruption is that of a poor voter boasting of the money his candidate is using to buy up the people's votes. The poor man is corrupt but has nothing to show for his corruption except the vicarious thrill of being associated with wealth for a brief period. Indeed, our whole attitude towards elections is corrupt. As rabid followers of this or that candidate, we distort truth, fabricate lies, justify and sometimes participate in all kinds of shady schemes to gain victory. We are more moral about basketball games (expecting fair refereeing and clean playing) than about elections.

The wonder of it is that after the fever of the campaign, we complain about the quality of our leadership. That is unfair. We have no right to expect honor from dishonor, impartial statesmanship from rabid partisanship, intellectual integrity from dishonesty. Thus, in practically every election in the past, we got exactly what we wanted.

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### THE TRAPPINGS OF EDUCATION

We point proudly to the thousands of educational institutions that abound in this country. As a matter of fact, education is one of our primary forms of business enterprise. We mass-produce graduates by the thousands. We can be proud of the quantity perhaps, but certainly not of the quality. But this does not worry us, nor the students themselves, because by and large we view education merely as the acquisition of a diploma. Many of those who graduate from college do not practice their professions, anyway. The important thing in this country is to be a professional, to be the possessor of a degree. We strive for the trappings of education and neglect education itself. Herein lies the corruption.

### STARTING EARLY

But the corruption in education goes even deeper. It reaches into the daily life of students and teachers. For isn't a student starting to be corrupt when, in his effort to graduate with honors or merely to pass, he seeks the good graces of authoritarian teachers, kowtowing to them, hypocritically agreeing with them, bartering his independence of mind for the teacher's approval? Isn't a student being taught the ways of corruption when he views grades and not learning as the purpose of education? Isn't a student tempted to be corrupt when he tries to fulfill certain requirements, no matter how, because the act of fulfillment and not the learning to be derived from it is considered primary? And if from these students come some of our future educators, shall we not be perpetuating standards of value peculiar to a corrupt society? The recent scandal involving teachers who falsified their records or enrolled for credits but did not attend classes is a sad commentary on

the morals of some of those to whom we entrust the character training of the young.

The crux of the whole matter is our corrupt view of education, not as a desirable end in itself, but merely as a means for securing our material goals.

Looking at this corrupt society, one is tempted to say that the only uncorrupted individuals are the children. While young, they are eager for the substance of learning itself. They speak their minds. They question and they disagree. Yet, under corrupt conditions, how quickly they learn how to compete with the other fellow for grades and scores, how readily they adapt themselves to the necessity for hypocrisy, for submission, for unquestioning conformity. The seed of corruption is planted early and grows fast. The most "successful" students possess it to a greater degree.

### A SUBSIDIARY ECONOMY

It is not only in education where we strive for the appearance, not the substance of achievement. In the economic field, we are satisfied with the appearance of industrialization and uninterested in pursuing real industrialization. Thus we have packaging plants which in reality merely assemble foreign-made goods. We have industries that do not utilize local raw materials. The principal beneficiaries of these so-called industries are not Filipinos, but foreigners who are gradually owning more and more of our resources and exhausting our dollars in the form of raw material importations and remittances of capital and profits. If they do not remit, their capital grows and so does their control of our resources. If they remit, they exhaust our foreign exchange reserves. These are facts which do not dismay us because the corruption of the national char-

acter has distorted our thinking. Businessmen, with a few exceptions, are busy setting up subsidiaries of foreign firms, lining up exclusive distributing rights.

Many unscrupulous individuals are obsessed with the idea of making a "killing," of getting rich overnight without producing anything. They cash in on scarcity, bribe officials or use influence to get special advantages. Their procedures are so unethical that sometimes only a thin line separates a racket from a business. No wonder that, except for a few, these so-called businessmen do not worry about the economic problems of their country nor about its economic future.

### LITTLE AMERICA

As a people, we always depreciate what is ours. Local products are discriminated against in our country. Local talent is largely unappreciated, and whatever is recognized as local talent is merely the best imitation of American artistry, proudly labeled as such. There are brave attempts to rediscover our cultural heritage and to reestablish our ties with our past, but our cultural corruption is so pervasive that the job of rediscovering ourselves is a difficult one. Meanwhile, the majority avidly imitate each new fad of the West.

We take pride in claiming that we are the most literate people in this part of the globe. Much of this self-satisfaction stems from the fact that our medium of instruction is English. We like to think that we can go anywhere and be understood because we are English-speaking. The truth, of course, is that the use of English has cut us off from our cultural heritage but has not opened to our people the best cultural achievements of the English-speaking world. Our poor command of the language makes this impossible. On the other hand, we understand just enough English to make us avid addicts of Western and gangster

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movies, vulgar song hits, and comics that have become almost the only reading fare of our youth.

### CORRUPTED NATIONAL SPIRIT

This is indeed a corrupt society. In all fields of endeavor, practices and standards of value are corrupt. No one can get anywhere without either using corrupt methods, looking the other way when corruption is committed, or supinely accepting the necessity of corrupt practice. The corrupt society produces a corrupt government and such a government aggravates and deepens national corruption.

Corruption in government is not limited to acts of malversation of public funds. Policies, too, may be manifestations of the corrupt spirit. Thus, when in the consideration of overstaying aliens we are more concerned with the plight of the country where these aliens should be returned instead of the effect that these aliens have on the economy of our country, we show evidence of corruption. When we show more concern for the interests of foreign investors, when we exhibit an eagerness to barter away our national resources in exchange for aid of dubious value, we demonstrate corruption of national spirit.

### THE RANGE OF CORRUPTION

There is a tendency in this country to regard corruption merely as the act of enriching oneself at the expense of public funds. This attempt to limit the range of corrupt activities to speculation serves to becloud the real meaning of national corruption. When we focus our attention only on the get-rich-quick schemes of our officials, we fail to appreciate how widespread corruption is and how deeply it has sunk into each one of us. For a man is corrupt not merely because he peddles influence;

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he is also corrupt when he deliberately disparages local talent and production in favor of the foreign. A man is corrupt not only when he absconds with company funds; he is also corrupt when he is willing to sacrifice national integrity for the sake of temporary mercenary advantage. A man is corrupt not merely when he buys position for himself or his proteges; he is also corrupt when he denies the ability of his people to surmount the obstacles imposed by colonial bondage. A man is corrupt not merely when, in an effort to enrich himself, he short-sells or uses inferior materials to maximize profit. He is also a corrupt individual when in the pursuit of personal fortune he deliberately engages in economic activities harmful to industrial development. There is corruption of the intellect when politicians do not mean what they say and change their political views according to the exigencies of the moment and for personal advantage. There is corruption of national character when we try to hide what is native and try to ape in a vulgar way Occidental values, morals, and standards. There is corruption of art when we endeavor to look upon this form of activity as an opportunity for commercialism and the imitation of foreign productions. A citizen is also corrupt when he not only neglects but also belittles the works and achievements of our national heroes.

The depth of our corruption at once becomes evident to one who realizes that not only do we fail to consider our social values as corrupt but we actually can feel proud of ourselves and condescending towards our Asian neighbors.

### THE BASIC CAUSE

Moralists, civic leaders, and politicians bewail these various forms of corruption but they have not looked at it as an integrated whole. They appeal for a regeneration, for a phoenix rising out of the ashes. In their obsession to impose a new

system of morals or to introduce a new political dispensation, they overlook the fact that corruption is not the cause of our present plight. Corruption is merely the consequence of a more basic problem—the problem of our colonial economy and thinking.

The Philippine situation today is a classic example of the effects of colonial rule on the habits, predispositions, and morals of a people. To eliminate the effect, you must eliminate the cause. Only a resolute nationalism can break the chains we ourselves have helped to forge. Only a determined effort to set a nationalistic course for our national life will finally free us of the corruption born of our political, economic, and cultural bondage.

Our corruption is essentially a consequence of our semi-colonial status. Those who try to solve this evil in our society have been dealing with an effect. They have been treating the manifestations of a disease without striking at the disease itself. This is, at best, a palliative measure comparable to relying on an anti-pyretic to cure a fever when what the patient needs is a drug to combat the infection that manifests its presence by the fever. You may succeed in reducing the fever and making the patient temporarily less uncomfortable. But until you eliminate the infection itself, the fever will not disappear permanently.

However, if you do not attend to the infection, it may yet get out of hand, with disastrous consequences. Thus mere palliatives in the form of government reorganizations, anti-graft campaigns, and pious exhortations from grandstand or pulpit may temporarily contain the spread of corruption. But as long as the evil that breeds it remains untouched, new forms of corruption will inevitably arise and re-enforce the old. The longer we postpone a realistic appraisal of our present status,

the more difficult it will be to make the first step toward a real cure for our corrupt society.

#### OUR SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.

Whether we like it or not, we have to admit that our economic, political, and cultural life as a nation is shaped directly by our "special relations" with the United States. What are the effects of these "special relations" on our economy, on our internal politics and foreign affairs, on our culture, morals, and national character? How have these relations shaped our corrupt society?

Half a century of economic relations with America has perpetuated our agricultural economy. We are helplessly dependent on the United States for all sorts of consumption goods, from cars to toothbrushes.

We have long realized that the solution to our economic poverty lies in industrialization. Until now, however, no resolute steps have been taken to make industrialization a reality. Our government in the past encouraged only a few export crops with a ready U.S. market, thus developing a lopsided economy dependent on a few exports to one country. We failed to develop an industrial economy that would take care of many of our consumption needs. Finished products which local producers can readily supply, using native raw materials and our "know-how," have a tough time fighting off American competition. Because our "special relations" with the U.S. assign to us the role of importer of finished products, our tariff policy has been designed to allow the entry of American products on a preferential basis. No local producer can thrive in competition with an efficient industrial machine ready to dump goods at low prices. Textiles, medicines, and other commodities which we could produce could never survive the onrush of American

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commodities. We export raw materials instead of processing them into finished products which we can consume and perhaps export. The value we derive from these raw materials cannot compare with the value we could get from them as finished products.

### WASTED TALENTS

Furthermore, because we do not process our own raw materials, industrial opportunities for employment of capital, labor, and talent are sadly lacking. Thus, people who have the drive and the talent to enter the production field and make their fortunes by producing what we need bend their efforts towards devising get-rich schemes or become agents of foreign firms. Men who, under a progressive economy, would perhaps develop into enterprising leaders of industry can become at best only highly-paid employees of foreign interests, with the corrupting influence on character that such a denial of talent implies. Those who strike out on their own make their fortune in buy and sell or by concluding more or less shady deals. Business talent denied socially useful expression by the stagnant colonial economy becomes corrupted and socially harmful.

### THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER

Another bad consequence of the lack of opportunity for employment in the economic field is that the government becomes the biggest dispenser of business contracts as well as employment. This makes of government such a rich plum that to secure it, many men are willing to indulge in the most corrupt election practices. Its position as the biggest employer results in another form of corruption. The pressure on poli-

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ticians to provide jobs for their men is so great that merit and seniority in the civil service are set aside. This corrupts both the deserving and undeserving employees or job-seekers because they must rely on "padrinos" instead of doing a good job or improving their qualifications. With the destruction of the merit system, we develop the worst type of bureaucrat, interested only in personal advancement, doing the minimum amount of work, obsequious and servile to his superiors, and eager to use the resources of government for his private benefit.

### NO SENSE OF SHAME

A particularly harmful manifestation of our corruption is our lack of appreciation for our resources. We are squandering our patrimony without regard for the right of future generations. We waste our resources in two ways: by our criminal disregard for the laws on conservation, and by our equally criminal propensity to aid aliens in amending or circumventing those laws, which are designed precisely to reserve the resources of this country for its citizens. Centuries of domination have succeeded in eliminating from our national character that sense of jealous possession that animated Lapu-Lapu and his men when they fought to preserve their land and treasure for themselves. After centuries of foreign control and foreign enjoyment of our resources, we no longer value the treasures of our lands and seas. So we use them indiscriminately, destroying our forests, dynamiting our fish, content with making "a fast buck." And when aliens wish to extract fortunes from our natural resources, we readily consent to be their dummies. In our complete corruption, we feel no sense of treachery, no sense of shame.



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### OUR NATIONAL INFERIORITY COMPLEX

Our subordinate status exercises a subtle corrupting influence on all of us. By constantly comparing the achievements of America with our own, we develop an inferiority complex which manifests itself in servility and blind imitation. In government, this servility is revealed by the alacrity with which we follow the suggestions of foreign advisers, official or not. So closely have we paralleled American foreign policy that we are often accused of not having a foreign policy of our own.

The repressive policies of Spain and our own enthusiastic acceptance of American culture have both worked to cut us off from our Asian heritage. Possessing neither a distinct body of traditions nor even a stable racial personality, we have been indulging in an orgy of blind imitation of foreign education, art, culture, and even manners and morals. Cut off from our past, feeling like a displaced nation in Asia, we are unable to assimilate intelligently and with discrimination. We behave like children in a room full of new toys. We take up each new foreign idea, imitate it quickly, and discard it just as quickly for something more novel.

Another manifestation of our inferiority complex is our disparagement of ourselves, our ideas and achievements, and our products. We are so certain of our inferiority vis-a-vis the Western world that we automatically prefer anything labelled "not made in the Philippines."

### DOLLAR CRUTCHES

Perhaps the most wide-spread corruption arising from our intimate relations with a bigger power is one which may be described as a weakening of the spine. Our consumption tastes have been pampered by the influx of foreign products. We

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have grown fat and flabby on a profusion of luxuries we can ill afford. Used to a self-indulgent way of life, we fear austerity. We do not believe in denying ourselves commodities not essential to survival because our consumption habits have been corrupted by a kind of false prosperity. From long practice, we have acquired the habit of dumping all our problems onto Uncle Sam's lap, there to be solved by more dollar grants. We do not want to secure a bright future by present denials. Our special relations with America gave us crutches which we don't want to throw away. We got used to these crutches. We are afraid to walk without them.

### THE ONLY SOLUTION

How shall we combat corruption? What can we do to strengthen the national spine? What solutions can we find for our problems? We can combat corruption and national apathy by a resurgence of nationalism. The only solutions to our problems are nationalist solutions.

Weak nationalism characterizes the corrupt society. It is a society satisfied with the empty shell of formal independence, whose politics reflects the policies and predilections of the dominant power, whose economy is subsidiary to the economy of this foreign country, and whose culture and social life are dominated and shaped by the culture and social life of this nation. To struggle against the conditions that nullify independence is the task of the nationalist.

An indication that our nationalism is weak is the commonly accepted view that nationalism is no longer a valid issue, that we have solved the problems of independence, that nationalism has certain subversive implications.

## THE MEANING OF NATIONALISM

What is Nationalism? Nationalism is not just an empty word full of emotional appeal. It is the expression of a reality — that we have a country of our own, which must be kept our own. Its political expression is independence. This means much more than formal recognition of our separate existence. It means the freedom to plan and work out our national goals without outside interference and with our national interest as the principal criterion. Economically, nationalism desires the conscious control and management of our resources. It accepts the aid and cooperation of its technologically more advanced sister nations but it insists on full control of its economic destiny. Culturally, the goal of nationalism is the development of a Philippine culture that has its roots in our own heritage, admits of foreign influences but retains its distinct and separate identity.

## ANTIDOTE FOR CORRUPTION

How would a resurgence of nationalism eliminate many of the corrupt practices and values of our society? Nationalism would provide a strong rallying point for united action. Knowing that they have chosen to take their country's future in their own hands, our people would initiate a sober stocktaking of our potentialities. Under the guidance of nationalistic leaders, there could be a common striving for the national good. Pride in and enthusiasm for this independent undertaking would gradually instill in the people the will to sacrifice present convenience for future prosperity. It would then be possible for our government to carry out those policies that would result in a diminution of our dependence on foreign goods in order to develop local production of our needs.

A nationalistic people would be willing to undergo temporary privation as long as they feel this will insure the achievement of the goals they themselves have chosen. Such a feeling of stern resolve would reduce some forms of corruption to a minimum. For example, there would be strong social disapproval of profiteering and blackmarketing, and public opinion is often a stronger deterrent than legal punishment. Great Britain, during the second world war, experienced such a strong resurgence of nationalism that it was possible to adopt the most stringent forms of self-sacrifice with the full cooperation of the citizenry.

## REBIRTH OF NATIONAL DIGNITY

Nationalism would restore the dignity and the pride of a people who have lost them because of years of mendicancy. Within the country, this would mean a stronger public opinion against graft and corruption in government because the people care about what the world thinks of their government. It would also mean that, in line with the administration's nationalistic policy on natural resources, the people would be aware of their solemn duty to themselves and to future generations to conserve their patrimony. Aside from the results that a resolute drive for conservation would produce, the people themselves, now jealous of their country's resources, would resist all attempts by foreigners to strengthen their economic foothold. Gone would be the colonial subservience which paved the way to fortune for many an adventurer. Instead, aided by a government which would see to it that Filipinos are given a preferential position in their own country, we Filipinos could successfully compete with foreigners in the economic field.

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### THE ECONOMIC ASPECT OF NATIONALISM

A nationalist economic program could mean only one thing — industrialization. The economic opportunities created by such a program would be tremendous, and a nationalistic administration supported by a nationalistic citizenry would make sure that the fruits of economic progress would be harvested primarily by Filipinos. Such a widening of economic horizons would lessen the pressure for employment in the government. The re-establishment of a sound civil service would then be possible. Furthermore, a new era of productivity could create new values, new standards of success. Prestige and financial reward would go to those who pioneer in new economic fields. The efficient entrepreneur would be the man to admire and to emulate. This would give the twin rewards of social prestige and wealth to those who produce socially desired goods with local labor and raw materials.

### THE END OF MENDICANCY

There have been voices raised against nationalism which predict that a reawakening of nationalism would result in deterioration of our special relations with the United States. If by deterioration is meant a diminution of our dependence on American aid apace with greater reliance on our own capacities and resources, then I am afraid these timorous Cassandras are right. Actually what nationalism will bring about is a reassessment of our relations so that we can meet the United States across the conference table as one sovereign nation to another. Our policies would be our own and primarily in defense of our own interests. Aside from the many political and economic advantages such a position would secure, we would be starting

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to get rid of the servility and submission which are so degrading to a sovereign nation.

Perhaps, too, with the rebirth of national dignity we might be spared the corrupt spectacle of a man who thinks that he can improve his chances for a high public office in this country by enlisting the support of the United States. In the past, such a move may have paid dividends. Certainly in an era of nationalism the corrupt view that the best officials for us are those who can get the most foreign aid would no longer obtain. For we would be thinking more in terms of self-help, and our solutions to our problems would be based on our own resources rather than on hand-outs from Uncle Sam. We can be certain that our growth in self-reliance and national dignity will be applauded by those in America who cherish their own historical tradition of self-reliance and dignity.

### CULTURAL RENASCENCE

The corruption in our culture and in our educational system arising from our false sense of values and our blind imitation of everything foreign would likewise diminish and finally disappear. In its stead there would be a dynamic appraisal of our cultural heritage, a return to our past as the starting point for the development of a distinctly Filipino culture. Inspired by nationalism, the intelligentsia would enter into an era of fresh productivity in all fields encouraged by their countrymen's appreciation of their worth.

### HOPEFUL SIGNS

At this point the question may be asked, how shall all this be achieved? How spark a reawakening of the nationalist spirit? How secure the initiation of nationalist policies? No

far-reaching change can be achieved overnight, of course, but we do have a starting point.

The present administration has in the past made pronouncements of a nationalist nature. The austerity program correctly implemented could have been the opening salvo of economic nationalism. The initial proposal to limit fuel importation was proof of this. Such a limitation would have meant tapping our alcohol resources as a local substitute and this in turn could have meant new forms of economic activity. Of course, various pressures were exerted to rescind this policy. This is understandable. The pity is that the Filipino people who would have been the ultimate beneficiaries of austerity, short-sightedly preferred present convenience to future gains. Their adverse reaction constituted additional pressure for the maintenance of our dependence on foreign importations. The austerity program degenerated into a temporary means for arresting the rapid dollar outflow.

#### PRESSURE FROM BELOW

Although we lost that valuable opportunity, there will be others. In a democracy, the government is subjected to all sorts of pressures, and the most vocal, most united pressure groups have the greatest influence on government policy. Pressure in favor of nationalist solutions to our various problems should be constantly exerted so as to counterbalance anti-nationalist pressure. The nationalist pressure should come from the ranks of legitimate industrialists and businessmen who are finding it difficult to compete with foreigners, from the ranks of intellectuals and professionals who can find no opportunity for their talents in a stagnant, corrupt society, from the ranks of the workers and the peasants for whom a colonial society can provide only a marginal income, and from

the ranks of the semi-employed and unemployed who will find job opportunities only under a nationalistic industrialization program. It is up to these groups, which would be the first beneficiaries of a nationalistic administration, to give our government a push in the right direction.

The alternative is continued poverty, backwardness, and all the ills of the corrupt society.

## THE FILIPINO POLITICIAN\*

WITH A FEW NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, THE FILIPINO\* POLITICIAN presents a pitiful figure. Because of the shallowness, vulgarity, lack of worthy purpose, and unashamed corruption of many politicians, political leadership in the Philippines has lost prestige. Many politicians today are not respected, they are looked upon merely as good connections.

Of course, some politicians of every country possess as inevitable characteristics, a certain sense of opportunism, insincerity, and corrupt tendencies. But these traits are magnified in our society because of the limited purposes of the nation and the circumscribed life of the people.

Politics today is a major occupation. Instead of being considered as an opportunity for service, many political positions have been transformed into means of personal enrichment.

### EMPLOYMENT AGENCY FUNCTIONS

The government is the biggest employer and the biggest source of opportunity for temporary security or permanent opulence. The professions are crowded because of the prestige value of non-manual labor. But since these professions cannot thrive successfully in a country whose people have a low purchasing power, many professionals who on their own merit cannot live on their practice either turn to politics or depend on political connections for their livelihood. Thus, many profes-

\**This Week*, Manila Chronicle, March 29, 1959

## THE FILIPINO POLITICIAN

sionals become government functionaries through the intercession of a political padrino. Entrance into the government, promotions within the service, and the distribution of political plums depend on the amount of political pull which many civil servants possess or assiduously pursue. Many Filipino politicians find themselves in a position where they have to promise and, as much as possible, to fulfill these promises to their various supporters either for employment or for other favors. These politicians think in terms of the individual benefits that they can dole out to their constituents, whether or not these benefits redound to the national good. Their perspective is limited and their purposes transient. This type of politician does not really participate in the overall determination of the country's goals, the discovery and analysis of the basic problems of the nation, or the delineation of his people's path to prosperity and success. This politician is concerned mainly with the preservation of his position, which in turn depends on the individual satisfaction of the ambitions of his supporters.

The Filipino politician, in effect, is an employment agency. He becomes an expert in letters of recommendation. In the process of job hunting for his loyal constituents, the politician no longer inquires about qualifications. Standards are set aside, and the inefficient and unqualified have a chance which otherwise they would not have under the merit system. The pressure of his constituents for job opportunities prevents the politician from pushing through certain ideas about government economy and public administration to which he might originally have been committed. He takes the easy way out, forgets government efficiency and economy, and readily accedes to plans for the expansion or opening of new offices. For, the more jobs open, the more chances for the accommodation of his proteges.

The pervasive influence of politics in all phases of our national life is the result of the power of government over many sectors. This situation helps the politician because reliance on mere government opportunities would not be enough to satisfy all his proteges. Employment of his followers in the different private businesses becomes a part of the politician's job. And some private enterprises are only too willing to accommodate certain strategically-placed politicians for favors they have received or may anticipate.

## MEN OF STRAW

Is the typical politician, therefore, merely an opportunist, a professional racketeer, apathetic to his country's welfare? Of course, there are those who are chronically corrupt and who see in politics their opportunity for power and riches. But, there are also those who start out in politics with the noblest ideals and the most earnest plans. Because of the nature of their work, however, these individuals soon degenerate. Why is this so?

First, because men with brilliant minds easily slide down to the level of mediocrity due to lack of time for reading, study, and analysis. And why would these politicians lack the time? The politician is a public man. Even his private life is lived publicly. From early morning, he receives callers and, he in turn calls. He stands as padrino to baptisms and weddings. He has to attend parties, asaltos, and conventions. Often he is a professional mourner. If he comes from a province fairly distant from Manila, it is also his job to entertain "visiting firemen." What time does he have left for study? It is not surprising, therefore, that the public utterances of the politician are full of inanities and platitudes. The blame should not be laid only on the fact that he has to speak extemporaneously, but mainly on the more tragic truth that he has not kept up with

the times. Profuse quotations from Longfellow are his stock in trade — a clear indication that he is still relying on the intellectual baggage of his high school days.

## GOVERNMENT POSITION BECOMES A SIDELINE

The social factor that spurs the politician's intellectual degeneration is augmented by an economic factor. The politician's pay is meager but his standard of living has to be high. One cannot attend baptisms and weddings and the myriad other social obligations without money. So the politician has to find a second job, if he does not have private means. But, actually, this second job becomes his major occupation and his government position only a valuable sideline productive of useful connections. The moment he secures a major private occupation which has power and influence specially in the field of finance, business, or trade, the politician who is now an employee no longer needs to study, to plan, or to evolve policy. By force of circumstance, the policy is there for him to implement and the study is made for him.

When the interests of these employers are advanced by the same governmental policies that are required for the general advancement of the country, the duality of allegiance of the politician (to his employer and to his country) is not a serious matter. For example, if a Congressman represents Filipino industrial interests, his stand on questions like industrialization, tariffs, etc., while primarily favoring those interests, will not be inimical to the nation as a whole for the simple reason that the prosperity of the nation at this time is intimately linked with the prosperity of the Filipino industrialist. When, however, the interests the politician represents are foreign interests, his dual allegiance will be resolved in favor of those interests and against his people, simply because what is good for those

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foreign interests seldom coincides with what is good for the country.

The politician is entitled to advisers and assistants in his own government office, especially if he is of congressional rank. But because of the nature of his job as an employment agency and because of the limited number of positions that are at his disposal, merit occupies a low priority in the selection of his staff. The first consideration is reward for the loyal and those who may be of help in future elections. In some cases, a salary pertaining to a technical position is divided among several political henchmen. Because of the utter lack of merit of his staff, the politician becomes merely a spokesman of the interests of his employers. His views on government policy are dictated by the needs of his employers. His stand on various questions has to be that which will be beneficial to these employers regardless of its effect on the country as a whole. Of course, he justifies his stand in terms of the public good. He becomes quite adept at equating his employer's interests with those of his people.

## THE GRAND NULLITY

The politician is like a commodity on the open market. His value is expressed in terms of votes. Commodities are sometimes sold at prices which are very much more than their intrinsic value because of the absence of competition, because of widespread advertising, or because buyers are made to believe that the commodity possesses certain special attributes which allow it to serve for a variety of purposes. The less worthwhile the commodity, the greater must be the reliance of its sellers on eliminating competition, mesmerizing the public with advertising, and claiming for the product special qualities which

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it does not possess. The politician, too, may fetch in terms of votes a price out of all proportion to his intrinsic merit. This may happen if he has few competitors or if his competitors for public support have equally meager qualifications. It may also happen if he has systematically used all the media of communication to place his name and person in the public eye, thus exploiting his most inconsequential actions and utterances to the fullest. Finally, a politician may secure a totally undeserved public following by using the tactics of being all things to all men. Like the well-advertised medical cure-all, a politician may, by his intentionally vague public utterances, by his fence-sitting position on current questions, and by private promises of support to contending groups between whom no compromise is possible, project himself as the possessor of a secret panacea for all men. To please all, one must be nothing. To believe in a little of everything is to believe in nothing at all.

Fortunately for some, real merit is its own best advertiser and a few of our politicians have not found it necessary to use Madison Avenue gimmicks to gain public attention and deserve public support.

Unfortunately, the majority of our politicians have little to offer by way of intellectual achievement or solid service to the people. They must therefore maintain their prestige by dubious means. Luckily, a thriving profession generally called in the United States, Public Relations Counselling, has come to our politician's aid. With certain refinements, the advertising techniques of business are used by these counsellors to sell the politician to the people. The PRO has become the closest confidante and the best friend of the politician. How do the politician and his man Friday operate?



## EXPERTS ON MINOR ISSUES

The PRO sees to it that even the most minor actuations of his boss are covered in the papers. Press releases are issued, with the accompanying pictures, and followed assiduously until they see print. The activities of his wife, especially if they are done in the sweet name of Charity, are fully reported, and if there is a pretty daughter, she too is grist for the mill. The politician and his PRO are always on the alert for subjects to comment upon. With an eye to the next election, the politician issues statements on diverse questions, each one calculated to court the approval of a sector of the voting population. Whatever his real views may be, they undergo a process of self-censorship, the criterion being — will my stand on this question be popular with the voters or will it offend a powerful voting group?

The politician knows that the majority of voters love a good fight. He therefore proceeds to castigate his opponents in colorful language. But is his opposition based on a major issue of economic policy? The typical politician will refuse to engage in a battle over something as abstruse as economics, for a very practical reason. According to him, the public does not understand those subjects and will not, therefore, be interested in the controversy. But a ₱5,000 bed and a \$2.5 million yacht — these are issues that make the politician rub his hands in glee. He can really go to town on them, rant and rave in the best give-me-liberty-or-give-me-death style or shed false tears over the bed-less, yacht-less poor, and the voters will lap it all up. He knows that those are not the big questions, but does that bother him? If they will get him the votes, that is all that matters. Convictions, intellectual integrity, even his sense of proportion must all be subordinated to the desire to cater to the crowd, to get a good press, and to attract general

attention. The politician will speak anywhere, at any time, and on any subject. If in his incessant drive for publicity, he should make certain ridiculous or erroneous statements that draw general disapproval, his PRO can always be relied upon to issue a denial, or an explanation and clarification longer than the original statement. The desire for publicity, the frantic efforts to sell himself, thus contribute to the moral degeneration of the politician.

## THE CHAINS OF CORRUPTION

What is the principal motivation of the typical Filipino politician? He will tell you in ringing tones that his “magnificent obsession” is the public good. His record, however, reveals this to be mere window dressing. His motivation is personal, his goal: to stay in power or to regain power, and to use that power to achieve financial success and social position. Quite often, the politician is the small-town boy who made good. His luxurious car, his Spanish style mansion, his baroque furniture, and the countless invitations from Manila’s elite, are all beautiful symbols of his success. They are, alas, also the chains which hold him fast to the ways of corruption and intellectual dishonesty, for now that he has acquired expensive tastes, he cannot afford the luxury of honesty.

## CORRUPTION BY THE PUBLIC

The politician is not wholly to blame for his degeneration. Although he corrupts the people with his example and his distortion of political and social truths, the people in turn have played no small part in speeding him down the road of moral and intellectual dishonesty. By their insistent demands

for his personal attention, the people have deprived the politician of the time and privacy for intellectual growth. By their constant importunities for employment regardless of their lack of qualifications, they constitute a powerful pressure on the politician to disregard the goal of efficient and economical government. By their expectations of financial help and gifts in payment for their electoral support, they make the lure of dishonesty almost irresistible, or at least make it necessary for him to secure other sources of income which prevent him from serving his people well.

But this is not all. By their lack of intellectual discrimination, the people abet mediocrity and fail to put a premium on intellectual integrity. By their lack of interest in and understanding of the basic issues which face our country, the people encourage demagoguery in place of serious thought. By their pathetic gullibility, they foster the use by the politician of cheap publicity stunts. By their own tolerant or cynical view of corruption, they fail to constitute a powerful social force ready to decree social ostracism on any public servant who feathers his own nest at the expense of the general good.

The young man, therefore, who originally entered politics to be of service to his people is faced with powerful temptations to discard his principles, on the one hand, and, on the other, finds no support for his good intentions from the people who would benefit from them. It is not surprising, therefore, that among our politicians we have so many men of straw, without original ideas, devoid of strong personal convictions, going where the wind blows, subservient to those with greater power, whether Filipinos or foreigners, and with no greater goals in life than power and money.

## DISTORTION OF NATIONAL GOALS

During the early thirties, the prestige of the Filipino politician was still relatively untarnished. True, there were only a few of them. Government was not big and the people were enjoying a measure of colonial prosperity. The issue that pervaded politics during that period was independence. The residue of the nationalist ideal of our heroes of 1896 still exerted a fairly powerful influence. The electorate was not yet blase and many of our politicians were successful professionals with a strong sense of honor. They valued their good name and prided themselves on their patriotism.

The pre-war independence issue had kept our perspective clear. We were a nation distinct from the United States and we wanted something she was then unwilling to give. Our politicians still acknowledged the heritage of our Revolution and considered their own struggles to obtain our independence as the peaceful completion of the task our revolutionary heroes had handed down to them. Although our Americanization was being accomplished by various means, nationalism was kept alive by the unrealized dream of independence.

The second world war brought about a change in the complexion of Philippine politics. The common fight against the common enemy was the first of a series of historical circumstances which tended to blur our separate nationhood. Japanese despotism further obscured the distinction between our national interests and those of the United States. Under the heady influence of the "liberation" hysteria, the canned goods and the cigarettes of the GI's, and the initial influx of American luxuries, the Filipinos succumbed to the idea that to be back in the bosom of Mother America was the best thing that could happen to us. The attainment of Philippine independence under the Tydings-McDuffie Law completed the illu-

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sion that henceforth, Philippine and American interests were identical and that the U.S. had nothing in mind but the best interests of her beloved ward in the Pacific.

For many years after the liberation there persisted in the public mind a strong sense of identity with the U.S. which prevented us from realizing that we had problems of our own which could be solved only if we recognized that America's goals are not necessarily ours. This illusion was to continue its hold upon our minds until certain recent events placed the Garcia administration in a nationalist position.

### THE PRICE OF FOREIGN AID

How did this new climate affect the politician? When formal independence was attained, the most glittering issue of Philippine politics was lost. The fight for independence had shifted to the arena of economic policy, but many of the old-time politicians were not equal to the new situation. While this new struggle was clear to the foreign vested interests involved, the average Filipino politician, oblivious of the fundamental issues, was lost. His increasingly American orientation and the fixation on Philippine independence which characterized his previous struggles made it difficult for him to see that there was still one more fight to be waged — the one for economic independence. Moreover, the spectacular liberation, with its carnival atmosphere, had cast a hypnotic spell on the population and made it firmly and blindly pro-American. The people forgot that we fought the war to repel aggression and to assert our right to be free, and not merely to welcome back the United States.

Faced with a prostrate economy and with urgent problems of rehabilitation, tired of suffering deprivation, and relying on American wartime promises, both the leaders and the people

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convinced themselves that we could not do without American help or survive without America's doles. Because of wartime comradeship, because of the joys of liberation, we lowered our guard and lost the initial battles for our economic independence. Thus we saw the acceptance of parity and the establishment of bases whose terms we are just beginning to see in their proper perspective. The shortsightedness of our position at that time is just now beginning to dawn on us. We see now that we bartered long-term gains for immediate relief and that the price of American aid is continued economic dependence. At that time, however, we were content to be led by the hand, to be fed and clothed with relief goods, to let America shape our economy and direct our destiny. The majority of our politicians, who should have been farsighted enough to see the consequences, failed to warn us and were content to go with the tide of uncritical dependence on the United States.

The principal issue of post-war elections was, "Who is America's best friend? Who can get the most financial aid from the United States?" It was no longer necessary for the politician to exhibit any independence of judgment or originality of thought. The reliance on foreign aid and on American experts and advisers made it unnecessary for the politicians to do their own thinking. Therefore it was no longer necessary that politicians, to qualify for national leadership, possess brilliant minds and a record of constructive service to the country.

### THE NEW CAMPAIGN TACTIC

A new type of political leader was born, the perfect man of straw to lead a country which was independent in name only. This type of politician no longer stood on definite issues, had no views, and could therefore be in agreement with all

"respectable views." Not having any concrete plans nor any valid issues to bring to the people, this type of politician whipped up enthusiasm by means of new campaign tactics and gimmicks which revolutionized Philippine politics and whose unfortunate effects we shall all feel for a long time to come. These tactics were all carried out in the name of democracy but it was a vulgar sort of a democracy — the empty shell, the crowd-getting gestures, and not the essence of democracy. So successful was this campaign that carbon copies of the new type of leader sprung up all over the country.

The national idol no longer was a man who, during the campaign for independence, was a statesman, an orator, an economist, a lawmaker. Mediocrity became a virtue. As long as a man had strong arms to withstand thousands of handshakes, sturdy legs to jump over puddles, and the stamina to fly to remote barrios to administer first aid personally, he had the potentialities of great leadership. Neglect of official duties became standard practice, and this neglect was justified on the ground that the official was busily acquainting himself with the life of his people by making barrio to barrio, house to house visits. The only issue left for the Filipino official to speak on, then, was graft and corruption, and this seemed more like sourgraping because the accusers were out of power and had no access to the gravy train.

Behind the facade of personalized democracy, underneath the veneer of concern for the welfare of the humblest Filipino, behind the posture of vigorous action on governmental matters, what does such a politician really stand for? What has he really accomplished? Such a man is the true product of the colonial status of this country. Foremost in his mind is the belief that nothing can be done about our national problems without American aid, advice, and support. He is incapable of planning bold measures that will really solve the country's

problems for fear that such measures may alienate certain foreign interests. He is incapable of broad vision because of the limitations of his economic objectives for the country. Having voluntarily donned a political and economic straight-jacket because of his colonial mentality, his principal criterion for any new policy is whether or not it will meet with the approval of the Americans. Hence he has found it impossible to evolve trade and currency policies that would free us from economic dependence. Hence he has allowed our country to be saddled with military bases which have further impeded our economic development.

All these, plus a subservient foreign policy, have been carried out under the pretext that Philippine policies must be adjusted to American policies in order to assure American aid and American investments in this country. Meanwhile, the consequences of our shortsightedness and subservience were being felt. Still, many politicians went on playing the same old game of pleasing their constituents with jobs, smiles, and handshakes, hoping to perpetuate themselves in power by these simple means.

#### NEW VOICES

But a nation cannot persist in its shortsighted and suicidal policies for long. Sooner or later this lack of concern for our welfare takes its toll. The unnationalistic policies of previous administrations have so aggravated our position that the present administration has opened its eyes to many of the tragic errors of our traditional policies. The problems arising from the one-sided provisions of the military bases treaty, the realization on the part of many that Filipino businessmen are at a great disadvantage under existing rules, the dissipation of our foreign exchange because of economic doctrines based on a

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pastoral economy have awakened many of our leaders in turn to the gravity of our situation. Their declaration of a Filipino First policy, their assertion of Philippine sovereignty, and their decision to return to Asia have shocked those of their colleagues who still think in terms of a Fil-American honeymoon.

### LEADERS WITH PURPOSE

We are hearing new voices presaging a new era. The present administration could mark the end of a phase in Philippine politics. The boldness of its approach to old problems has been met by solid opposition but because it is more responsive to the needs of the times, the nationalistic assertions of the administration have met with unexpected response. We now have some politicians who, while retaining the traits of the traditional politicians, are developing into leaders with purpose. On the question of the assertion of Philippine sovereignty, the implementation of a Filipino First policy, and the forging of our ties with our neighbors, these politicians have shown vision and courage. There is now an intense desire to re-examine our ties with the U.S. and a great interest in seeking more creative, more imaginative policies in order to solve problems which are peculiarly our own.

These new voices, speaking with dignity and with serious purpose, are regaining for the politician the respect of his countrymen. Of course the ground work is just being laid and many of these earnest voices are still feeling their way, but they do have something to say and the people are beginning to listen. The awakening nationalism at the top has met with a corresponding awakening among the people. Where before the people corrupted their leaders and were corrupted by them, it is now possible to hope that mutual corruption will give way to mutual instruction and upliftment. Politicians can point the

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way to a new nationalist orientation and the people, by their enthusiastic response, can spur their leaders towards a more resolutely nationalistic position.

### THE JOHNNY-COME-LATELY

The behaviour of opportunists is the surest yardstick of the success or failure of a movement. An unfortunate and even dangerous manifestation of the growing success of the nationalist movement is the fact that opportunists have been flocking to its folds by the score. For them it is nothing but a new gimmick and they want to cash in on it. At bottom, they may still be inclined to the old policy of dependence on America, but seeing the response of the people to the nationalist movement, they hasten to join in the hope of introducing a watered-down version. The people should be mature enough to recognize every Johnny-come-lately on the national bandwagon. They are out to emasculate nationalism.

### THE MEANING OF HONESTY

Another dangerous enemy of nationalism is the politician who ignores this vital issue and seeks to lay all our problems at the door of graft and corruption. It is true that graft and corruption have pervaded all phases of governmental activity. Efforts are being exerted in certain political quarters to start a sort of crusade for the selection in 1959 and 1961 of honest men of whatever political persuasion. There is an attempt to make honesty the principal and almost the only qualification for public office. This demand for honesty needs clarification. It is true that we need honest men. But in this country, honesty merely means financial honesty. It merely means non-stealing of government funds and property.

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Honesty should embrace a larger field. It should mean, first of all, mental honesty. For a man may be honest in the sense that he does not steal but if he lacks intellectual integrity, if he would close his eyes to the incursion of foreign interests at the expense of the people's welfare; then, his financial honesty would be of no avail since he would be a party to the enslavement of his own people. Honesty must mean sincerity of purpose in the service of the people. Honesty must be based on nationalist integrity. It is therefore dangerous to flirt with this movement to seek "honest men." For a man may be honest in the financial sense without really working for the basic salvation of his people. Merely to look for "honest men" would be to deflect us from the rightful course which events are taking now. A general demand for "honesty" would conceal the issues on which politics stands.

### ISSUES INSTEAD OF MEN

Today some of our politicians are beginning to stand and fight for issues. This is a healthy development in our history. We are starting the departure from personality as the basis for political success. To demand that a man be merely honest without making him reveal his real views on definite issues would be a return to the old system of voting for men instead of for issues. The party in power has come out squarely for independent action, for a Filipino First policy. Let it defend that issue. If there is an opposition party that would like to dispute these contentions of the administration, let it come out squarely for the retention of parity, for the maintenance of the present bases arrangements, against the diversification of our trading pattern. The Liberal party has in a way castigated the administration for what it calls its veering-away-from-America policy. These are real issues and it would be of

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tremendous benefit to the people if both parties defended their respective stands instead of beclouding the issues and restricting themselves to the question of who is more corrupt.

### A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

A clear division on these issues will provide our electorate with the opportunity of educating itself and participating in the determination of national policy. Our people will learn to choose men not on the basis of what these men can do for them individually, not on the basis of a vague reputation for intellectual honesty and oratory and the so-called common touch, but on the issues for them and their country. This will elevate the political education of the masses and the politician will strive hard to study the problems of the country in order to make a stand on the basis of which he will present himself to his constituency. Only then can the democratic process be implemented. Only then can the politician claim to be a true leader.

The politician of today has a golden opportunity in his hands. It is now within his power to redirect national development so that the benefits of economic progress will be reaped largely by his own countrymen. His countrymen have demonstrated by their response to his nationalistic utterances that they are at the threshold of a new understanding of their social goals. The politician has the solemn responsibility of fostering this new maturity, of crystallizing the vague aspirations of his people for dignity, self-respect, and independent action. At no time in his life has the politician had such an opportunity for service. The politician who persists in his attempts to deflect or to blunt the nationalist movement will earn for himself the contempt of his countrymen and the condemnation of history.



## THE PHONY SOCIETY\*

A PHONY IS A FAKE. A PHONY IS A FRAUD, A PERSON WHO pretends to be what he is not or claims to be more than what he is. We Filipinos are all phonies in one way or another. That is because we live in a phony society.

What is a phony society? It is a community of persons that misrepresents its present life and deludes itself into believing that its goals are real and in accordance with its needs.

### THE COLONIAL BOUNDARIES

As a people, we are phonies because our standards are borrowed, because our goals are superficial, because we live in the image of an alien society whose most trivial and frivolous characteristics we strive hard to emulate. Ours is a phony society because it pretends to be what it is not.

Foolishly flaunting our independence, we refuse to acknowledge, even to ourselves, the fact that hidden behind the brave front of freedom, there are strong colonial chains that bind our nation. Our government may enunciate general policies couched in the most optimistic and grandiose terms, but these only serve to disguise the truth that our national ambitions can only be narrow and superficial because we dare not operate beyond the boundaries that colonialism imposes. Because for many years, we have based our national expectations on false premises, phoniness has become normal with us. Our views are distorted and our minds are imprisoned by colonial bias.

\*This Week, Manila Chronicle, September 11, 1960

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We are phonies because our social life is phony and such a phony society cannot but breed more and more phonies who, in turn, deepen and widen the scope of fakery in this country. Is there no way out for us, then? Is there no possibility of breaking the vicious cycle? Those Filipinos who can still stand outside themselves and view both themselves and their countrymen with detachment will understand why our society and our people are what they are. Knowing the roots of this phony society, knowing the conditions that breed phoniness, they will surely find a way to help their country and themselves, if they can rise above the society that bred them and if they are earnest men who love their homeland.

### THE PHONIES IN OUR MIDST

Perhaps the most pervasive of the root causes of our phony society is our incessant attempt to emulate the standards of an industrially advanced society — that of the United States. We have come to consider as our inalienable right, the enjoyment of the consumption standards of a society whose economic level we have not even started to approximate. This penchant for high living has had a corrosive effect on many aspects of our society. One of the most obvious effects of our inordinate love for the material comforts and luxuries of life is the widespread venality and corruption in public office. In an industrial society, there are many opportunities for financial success. At the same time, production has reached such high levels that what used to be luxuries can now be sold at prices within the reach of the moderately successful. Neither condition prevails in our country. Both the underdeveloped state of our economy and the strangle hold that aliens have over it greatly narrows down opportunities for legitimate financial success for Filipinos.



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And yet, over the years, the majority of Filipinos have become conditioned to a high level of consumption. The result is the phony in government who preaches austerity while riding in a Cadillac, or the phony who orates on the need for honesty while his agents busily collect his "tong" on government transactions, or the phony who loudly proclaims his patriotism but is the faithful servant of foreign interests.

### BUYING CULTURE

A frequently ridiculous effect of our imitation of American standards is exemplified by the phony who thinks he can buy culture. Having fallen victim to the wondrous art of American advertising, we have equated personal worth with material possessions and identified culture with the mere possession of the generally accepted symbols of culture: the painting on the wall, the TV and the hi-fi in the living room, to mention a few.

When hi-fi first burst upon the market, eager buyers of culture surrounded themselves with the gadgets. It did not matter that all they ever played on their instruments was the latest on the hit parade; it did not matter that they could not distinguish between a Beethoven and a Shostakovitch symphony—they had a hi-fi and, presto, they were cultured. A truly pathetic offshoot of the hi-fi fad was what happened to the strivers after status who could not afford a true hi-fi set. They bought, by the hundreds, haphazardly assembled radio-phonographs in garish-looking, flimsy cases, all proudly and conspicuously bearing the magic word "hi-fi." And the little phonies, imitating their phony social superiors, no longer said, "Play the phonograph," but "Play the hi-fi."

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### HEDONISTIC PURSUITS

A much more serious, though perhaps less readily perceivable, effect of our wholesale emulation of American consumption patterns may be found in the plight of our economy. Economic policy makers in our government have known for a long time that to progress we must produce more of what we need. In other words, we must industrialize. They know, too, that our efforts at industrialization are seriously hampered in two ways by our present consumption habits. First, scarce foreign exchange is diverted to non-essential consumer items, instead of being used for machines and materials not available locally but necessary to set up our production plants. Second, in response to demand pressures, local businessmen channel a great part of their finances to the production of trivial consumption goods which an underdeveloped nation could very well do without. These same pressures from the public seriously undermine the formulation and implementation of economic policy, with the result that economic measures are always full of convenient loopholes and their implementation is half-hearted, if not downright dishonest. Practical politicians, after all, cannot afford to ignore public clamor.

Sickening as it may be to watch ourselves striving for luxuries we can ill afford, disheartening as it may be to see a whole people wasting their talents and resources in the hedonistic pursuit of material comforts, we have, at least, the consolation of knowing that we are not entirely to blame for this state of affairs.

### IN THE AMERICAN IMAGE

We are victims of the historic drive of the United States to spread and to impose the American image. During the sec-

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ond half of the nineteenth century, the Americans, supremely confident of the superiority of their way of life and desirous of expanding their commercial opportunities, applied their missionary zeal to the task of making peoples everywhere responsive to American ways and thinking, and above all, consumption habits.

Professor William Appleman Williams in his book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, observes that:

Such general and active support for economic expansion is often neglected when considering the coming of the Spanish-American War. It is customary to explain the war as a crusade to save the Cubans, . . . but many important businessmen . . . came to support war for specific commercial purposes as well as for general economic reasons . . . Most Americans looked to Asia and to China in particular, as the great market which would absorb their surpluses. As a result, a growing number of Americans began to think about a war with Spain more in terms of the Philippines than Cuba itself.

American political tradition had been staunchly anti-colonial. Unfortunately, economic exigencies required economic expansion, and America evolved in the Philippines a kind of colonialism the underlying economic motivations of which were masked, in the eyes of Filipinos as well as of Americans of good will, by a liberal dose of "upliftment" projects for us, benighted Asians. Subsequent events were to demonstrate that for sheer gullibility, we probably have no equal in the world.

First, we swallowed the fairy tale that the American conquest and occupation was a godsend, that the Americans had only one purpose — to uplift us from our state of barbarism and, with loving care and tender solicitude, prepare us for self-government and a glorious independence. Next, the six years of brutal suppression of our nationalist struggle were made to appear as if they had been directed only against a tiny minority of outlaws with unsavory reputations who were disputing the

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overwhelming desire of our people to be embraced by American commercialism.

### OUR CAPTIVE MINDS

A government was then foisted on us, manned by pro-American elements among the local population. Filipino participation in government was gradually widened but each step was taken only when there were enough "safe" elements among the population to take over. This tactic effectively confused and divided the remaining nationalist forces. The initial gains were consolidated by capturing the minds of the young through the imposition of English in government and in the schools. Soon, captive minds had forgotten their past and with the introduction of American ways, began looking down on their own.

### FROM IMITATION AMERICANS TO PHONY FILIPINOS

Our economic difficulties were palliated by tying up our life with that of America's. We became increasingly dependent on the conqueror both intellectually and economically, and gradually, we even lost our ardent desire to be free. A new image of America emerged. She was, according to our history books written in English, our benevolent protector, our unselfish savior. More and more, we got used to American goods that came in under a preferred status. Our consumption habits molded by American goods, our minds fed almost exclusively by American books, we saw the world through the eyes of American interpreters and geared our plans and ambitions, both personal and national, to the plans and ambitions of our mentors. Having become imitation Americans, we succeeded in transforming ourselves into phony Filipinos, afraid of a sep-

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arate national existence, incapable of original thought, and fit only to build and perpetuate a phony society.

### THE STATUS SEEKERS

The fact that we are constantly striving to imitate another people instead of developing in our own way makes us phonies. The further fact that it is the grosser aspects of American life that we are imitating makes us phonier still. Thoughtful critics of the American scene have deplored the transformation of the American people into a nation of status seekers for whom an individual's place in the social ladder is determined mainly and in the majority of cases by his possession of the accepted status symbols.

American social scientists have decried their countrymen's accepted manner of sizing up a man by the neighborhood and the house he lives in, the car he drives, the school he went to or sends his children to, the gadgets and appliances he can show off. The yardstick is material possession more than personal worth or achievement. This is not surprising in a society like the United States.

Four characteristics of American society are responsible for the phony yardsticks for social status, according to Vance Packard in his book, *The Status Seekers*. First, many studies of social stratification in the United States reveal that, far from being the fabled land of opportunity where slum boys grow up to become millionaires, America has a pretty rigid economic stratification. Regardless of their abilities and talents, the overwhelming majority of workers remain workers all their lives and so do their descendants. Second, the extensive use of machines and the rationalization of production has resulted in a fragmentation of skills so that the work of each man is

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so simple and repetitious and so minor a part of the whole production process that he has no pride in his work. His only concern is the pay envelope and what it will buy. Hence, Americans are very consumption-oriented. Third, society has become so complex and mobile, and business organizations so large, that most people have no way of gauging each other's importance or worth except by their material possessions. Finally, advertising has re-enforced the other three factors and established certain consumer's goods as status symbols. These aspects of American society explain its system of values, and it is the job of America's leaders to find solutions for their problems. Since, with the exception of advertising, the contributory conditions are not present in the Philippines, many of our phony attitudes are purely imitative.

### IMPORTED VALUES

Ours is an underdeveloped society. Supported by the correct economic policies, it could still be possible for many Filipinos with talent and determination to pioneer in many productive fields and thus earn real status, as well as wealth, by socially valuable labor. Instead, we choose to pretend that our social life is an extension of America's. We accept without discrimination the values of Hollywood, TV, and the comic strips, and allow our habits and attitudes to be molded by the advertising campaigns of American manufacturers. To be a phony because objective social conditions push one to it is pathetic but understandable; but to be a phony, living a socially useless life with a phony set of values painstakingly imported, when there is so much room for a constructive, socially useful life, is certainly tragic.

What has happened to us is a collective softening of the backbone. We have repudiated our ancestors who struggled

mightily for an independent destiny. We do not want to work and sacrifice to build the foundations for our prosperity. We just want to enjoy the fruits of an artificial and largely illusory colonial stability even though this will surely mean economic strangulation and poverty for future generations. No valid goals, no brave visions of the future animate our phony society. Since we have no social goals that can inspire us to united action, each person pursues his own trivial, private goal without reference to the social whole. And this goal is, more often than not, the phony one of a higher level of consumption.

Any fairly intelligent observer can readily cite many specific manifestations of our phony character, our phony attitudes, our phony ideas. For our present purpose, a few examples should suffice.

### PHONY CONCEPTS OF DEMOCRACY

For the last six decades, we have been proudly proclaiming that we are a democracy. Oratorical contests and election speeches have harped incessantly on this theme. But do we really understand democracy? Has the democratic idea really grown strong roots in our body politic? Or is our understanding of the democratic philosophy as phony as our attachment to it?

For many, democracy is the mechanical act of voting. We delight in the thought that we have a say in the selection of our officials, but this formal compliance with democratic process is not accompanied by an understanding of the substance of democracy. For prior to election day, when we should be thinking seriously of issues, national goals and policies, and the intellectual qualifications of our candidates, we irresponsibly turn the election campaign into a three-ring circus. After having been herded into the polling booths like so many placid

cows, after having made our meaningless scratches on our ballots, we feel we have performed the sum total of our democratic duty, until election time comes around again. Or if, between elections, we take notice of government affairs, it is only to grumble ineffectually about graft and corruption. And what is our remedy for all malfeasance in office and dereliction of duty? Do we group together to push through some valid, social goal and make our voices heard as the sovereign people? We don't. Our universal remedy for whoever displeases us in our government is to threaten, "Wait till the next election; we won't vote for you again." As citizens of a democracy, we are phony citizens indeed.

The supreme expression of democracy, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," has no real meaning for us. Because we have no clear-cut social goals, because we have abdicated our throne as a sovereign people by allowing ourselves to be led by the nose by those who take advantage of our cupidity, our gullibility, or our indifference, we do not have a government of the people. Indeed, events sometimes make one wonder whether there is in this country a people that a well-intentioned, democratic government could be responsive to. What we have, it seems, is a collection of phony citizens, all going their separate ways and thinking only of their own needs and desires.

### GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNED

For one thing, the moment men are elected or appointed to office, perhaps with the exception of the small employees, we no longer consider them part of the people, and they themselves, with their new status, erect additional barriers. The main difference between them and us is, of course, that they now have a milking cow—the government—and we haven't.

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Whether they are honest or not, we expect that they will, as a matter of course, feather their own nests. But the queer thing about our attitude toward corruption is that, though we are always declaiming against it, many of us secretly envy the smart operators. The edge of our anger is dulled by the secret knowledge that if we were in, we might do the same ourselves. We don't really believe that government can be truly of the people, by the people, and for the people. For the fact is that we do not really consider the government as ours. We feel no responsibility for its failures, and we are indifferent to its achievements so long as these do not directly benefit us in a material way. We are hostile toward our government, obeying its laws, not because we desire the general welfare, but only because we are afraid of getting punished should we get caught. We certainly do not feel protective towards public property, more often than not considering government assets as fair game for anyone. Even so-called moral persons do not have any compunction about cheating the government. A touch of larceny is fashionable and a supposedly upright citizen who may even be a civic leader is not ashamed to relate how he went around the law and avoided paying taxes or customs duties.

Our entire attitude toward government brands us as phony citizens of a democracy. It also proves that we still possess a colonial mentality, for our attitude toward government is a carry-over from our colonial days when government was a hostile entity separate from the people and existing against the people's interests.

## THE PROCESS OF DE-FILIPINIZATION

Nowhere is our phony character more noticeable than in the field of culture. We have taken over with pathetic eager-

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ness the job of de-Filipinizing ourselves which was started sixty years ago as a useful colonial policy. And we must admit that, amid our many failures as a people, this is one job we have done successfully. Many ridiculous manifestations of our Americanization may be mentioned.

There is the radio commentator who takes pride in his English perhaps because he has managed to collect all the American accents from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific Ocean. Then there are the mothers who insist that with their offspring the *yayas* use English even though the poor maids have only a dozen words in their vocabulary. Our slavish imitation of Hollywood styles in dress, entertainment, songs and dances, and even haircuts, would all be extremely laughable if we did not realize that our cultural captivity has robbed us of originality and a distinct national personality.

Our Americanization has also had a harmful effect on the development of Filipino talent. Serious Filipino music has no public recognition and almost no support. We may safely assume that countless talented Filipinos, faced with public indifference, have yielded to the need for financial security and denied expression to their special talents. Even local composers of popular music do not have the audience that American song hits have and are reduced to making cheap Tagalog translations or new arrangements of Hollywood hits. Having adopted the entertainment-oriented culture of the United States, Filipino youth idolizes rock-and-roll singers, movie stars, and fashion models. In America itself, thoughtful critics of American society have often deplored the orientation of their young toward the less socially valuable pursuits, with the result that the U.S. has a serious shortage of doctors, nurses, and scientists. Such an orientation is doubly harmful to an underdeveloped country like ours which desperately needs to harness to socially productive pursuits all the energies and talents of its people.

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From these few examples, we can see how our phony culture is hampering both our economic life and the full flowering of local talent.

### SUBSTITUTES FOR NATIONALISM

Enthusiastic but hardly knowledgeable nationalists point with pride to our cultural rediscovery. They hail our reawakened interest in our folk dances. There is no doubt that this by-product of the nationalist movement is a favorable development in our cultural renaissance. However, there is one danger we must guard against. When pride in our folk dances is part of a nationalist movement which holds fast to the bigger goals of economic and political independence, it is a good thing. But, when our new-found enthusiasm for our folk culture becomes the sole outlet of our nationalism or is used as a substitute for more important forms of nationalistic action, then this minor cultural reawakening becomes, in the long run, only one more means of keeping us contented with our colonial status. To focus all our energies on such a limited cultural revival as folk dancing is like gratefully accepting the crumbs from the table when we are entitled to the whole loaf. That there is a danger that the professed nationalism of many has already been channelled to this safe area of action is one more proof of our phony character that so easily mistakes the inconsequential trimmings for the real substance.

### LACK OF SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Phony attitudes also abound in the educational field. Our diploma mania immediately comes to mind. Degrees are more important than knowledge. Day after day in our schools, students acquire bits of unrelated information which will be

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used to get a good rating in a test and then be conveniently forgotten. Erudition is sought instead of wisdom. Students are in school to study but not to think. And worst of all, many among both the teachers and the taught, view education as a process of accretion rather than of change, something similar to filling up your gas tank at the nearest station. The car doesn't become a better car; the gas just takes you where you want to go and enables you to look down on the pedestrians you pass. The almost complete lack of any social conscience among our young people becomes evident when we ask them why they are studying. The stock answer is: "So that I may know more, so that I can be successful in my future career." This success is of course financial. It is a phony educational system indeed that cannot develop in the young a modicum of social conscience, an awareness that the educated person cannot think only of himself and his private goals but has a responsibility toward his fellowmen.

In the field of economics, social conscience is even more conspicuously absent. Very few have the seriousness or the sense of responsibility to build up a business based on quality production. The goal of many is the "fast buck," and in pursuit of quick profits, every trick of the trade is permissible as long as you don't get caught. And after you have amassed your wealth, all you need to do is serve in a few charity committees, have your picture taken handing a check to the fund raiser of some civic organization and, overnight, you can become a pillar of society. That's standard operating procedure in our phony circles.

### PHONY INDUSTRIALIZATION

Perhaps the best example of phonyism is our so-called industrialization. We proudly claim that we are fast becoming

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an industrialized nation, but the truth is that we only have a mushrooming of assembly and packaging firms. We are satisfied with the semblance of industrialization: paper clips, zippers, bottled soft drinks and such. We refuse to accept the fact that without basic industrialization, we cannot progress as a nation. Since rapid industrialization can only be achieved by curtailment of luxury consumption and a drastic reorientation of our consumption habits, we just take the phony way out. We pretend that we are rapidly industrializing the country and, to convince ourselves of this, we marshal a lot of figures, although we are fooling no one else.

### FOREIGN BRAND NAMES

So American-oriented are our consumption habits that one of the most amusing pastimes is to guess how many of the American brand names are really locally-produced goods masquerading under a foreign-sounding name. I have a theory that Ang Tibay shoes would double its sales if it ostensibly went out of business and then reopened under some magic name like Walkrite or Floorshine shoes. We phony Filipinos do not sufficiently appreciate a straightforward Filipino brand name. We want to be fooled or we like to fool other fools into believing that our latest shirt is imported, "stateside."

### THE BADGE OF CHARITY

Our morals are phony, too. Our social behavior betrays our essentially negativistic traits. We profess to be moral but this is only in the sense of not doing wrong, or more often, of not being caught doing anything wrong. We seldom attempt to do anything worthwhile for the community. If we ever do something, we have to do it in the form of fashion

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shows and other types of money-consuming and publicity-seeking activities which quickly assume more importance than the charitable goal itself. Charity becomes an excuse for advertising the conspicuous leisure of our social elite and provides them with a false sense of mission. Unfortunately, social and economic problems cannot be solved permanently by the palliatives which charity regularly doles out. People in the lower levels of our society ape their social superiors and also try to solve community problems by fund-raising activities instead of directing their attention to more permanent solutions.

### THE DEGREES OF PHONINESS

Our society is sick. It has become decadent before reaching its maturity. We are all guilty of phonyism but some are more guilty than others. Many of our phonies have been formed solely by the operation of historic and cultural forces. They are unaware of their phoniness and would probably quickly change their ways if they were made to understand how they are harming themselves and their country. Others are aware of their phoniness at certain times but are impelled to conform with the general pattern because of economic considerations or social pressure. These are the timid souls who will eagerly follow the attitudes and ways of a more honest society.

The worst phonies in our midst are those conscious phonies who have made of phoniness an art, a way of life, for selfish considerations. The politician who pretends to work for the welfare of his constituents, but in reality is the servant of alien powers whose interests he protects in exchange for support of his high political ambitions, is a dangerous phony. The businessman who pretends to be a responsible pillar of society with a carefully built up reputation for social consciousness, but in



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THE VALIDITY OF RIZAL'S TEACHINGS TODAY, SIXTY THREE years after his death, is both a measure of his greatness and of our lack of greatness as a nation. The importance of Rizal's ideas for our generation has a twofold basis—first, their applicability to present-day problems, and second, their inspirational value. Rizal holds a mirror to our faces and we see ourselves, our vices, our defects, our meanness. Because the conditions he describes are the very conditions we see around us, and the characters he portrays are people we continue to meet, we readily respond to his earnest desire for basic changes in our society and in ourselves. One hand holds a mirror to shame us and the other points the way to our regeneration. Yet, the truth is that the mirror was not meant to reveal our image, but the image of the people and the society of Rizal's time. The fact that Rizal's aim was to depict the society in which he lived, and the fact that we nevertheless find that he is also speaking about the society in which we live, have given rise to two schools of thought about Rizal.

### TWO EXTREMES

One group reasons out that because Rizal is still applicable today, he must have possessed uncanny powers of prophecy. Furthermore, because he is still valid today, Rizal will be valid for all time. In their sincere reverence for our national hero

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*\*This Week, Manila Chronicle, June 14, 1959*

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they have transformed him into a demigod whose teachings will constitute the final word, the definitive Bible, on any and all aspects of Filipino life now and in the future.

The other group pays lip service to Rizal's memory, professes to love our hero by conceding his greatness, but in reality emasculates his teachings by emphasizing only what it considers the harmless and non-controversial aspects of his life and works. Some in this group claim that the conditions Rizal wrote about no longer exist today. Others even go so far as to say that Rizal's characters in his two novels were pure fiction, without basis in fact.

### A "DEVITALIZED" RIZAL

Both groups distort the meaning of Rizal for our people. Those who want to strain out of the real Rizal all that is vital and forceful, leaving a sterile, almost meaningless hero, are those who find the truths he spoke, unpalatable and dangerous even now. A "devitalized" Rizal is what they would offer our people as a concession to the abiding love which Filipinos feel for their national hero. Perhaps, if they had their way, some would prefer a "safer" hero. In fact, there have been attempts to foist upon our people another national hero by means of propaganda and awards carrying his name. Such moves will not succeed because, to merit the hero worship of present and future generations, a man must stand on solid achievements and not on a hollow reputation built up by high-pressure salesmanship. History will be the ultimate judge of whether a leader will emerge as a hero or prove to be a mere passing fancy. History enshrines the true heroes and mercilessly exposes the fakes.

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Some true lovers of Rizal are also guilty of distorting his meaning for us. When they extol Rizal's prophetic vision and proclaim that his teachings will forever be valid, they fail to view society as a dynamic system. Without perhaps being conscious of it, they really proceed on the assumption that the Filipinos as a people will forever remain backward, poor, ignorant, and corrupt. Their static concept of Rizal is a denial of the dynamic implications of his life, his work, and his death.

Rizal was a product of his times, but unlike lesser mortals, he could stand apart from his society and describe it clearly and dispassionately. Thus he is the best commentator of Philippine society during the latter part of the 19th century. That the comments he made on that period are applicable to ours shows that Philippine society has changed very little from his time. Rizal's works exposed the defects of Philippine society during that period. He might as well have been writing about our time, for all around us we see the same backwardness, the same predominance of intolerance, the same prevalence of ignorance, the same display of opportunism and corruption, the same lack of nationalist sentiment, and the same disunity when we should be working together in pursuit of common national goals. Rizal never intended that his works should mirror the ills of the Philippines a century hence; but if they do, it is because, as a people, we have progressed little and learned still less from our long colonial past.

### A MIRROR OF THE PAST

Rizal would be horrified and greatly saddened to learn that we are celebrating his centennial precisely by extolling his validity for our times. His zeal as a social reformer, his dedicated efforts to improve his countrymen, all his patriotic labors were directed toward one goal — reforms. If we revere

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Rizal, if we wish to honor him, if we want to follow in his footsteps, our task is clear. That task is to make Rizal obsolete. To do this, we must eradicate the ills of present-day society so that Rizal's teachings will become what they were meant to be, a mirror of the past; and the future Philippine society, a realization of Rizal's dream. Rizal would then be obsolete as a critic of the present although he will forever remain the courageous and wise commentator of the past whose life and works guided his people to worthy achievements. In that bright Philippines of the future, Rizal will still be a great hero because he spurred us to reform ourselves and achieve greatness as a people and not because, as some of his more fanatical adherents wrongly believe, he is the fountain of all wisdom for all situations.

### TULISANES IN CADILLACS

Why is Jose Rizal our national hero? A hero is he who best understands the society in which he lives, who knows the problems and the aspirations of his people, who by his teachings and his labors, concretizes these problems and aspirations so that the vague discontent and the hazy strivings towards something better in the people's minds are crystallized into a clear pattern of action with definite goals. Rizal is still very much our hero because he crystallized for his generation as well as for ours most of the great problems of Philippine society.

In page after page of his *Noli Me Tangere* and his *El Filibusterismo* we read indictments of our present society. In chapter XI of *El Filibusterismo*, Simoun, addressing the friars and the military and civil functionaries, said, "The evil is not in that there are *tulisanes* in the mountains and uninhabited parts — the evil lies in the *tulisanes* in the towns and cities." When we consider the widespread corruption in our

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society today, we can agree with Simoun's verdict. For after all, what is a *tulisan*, essentially? He is a man who disregards and is contemptuous of the law, and who, by fair means or foul, is bent on getting for himself whatever he desires regardless of the consequences to society of his anti-social actions. Today, those who profit from the people's money, those who make of government a milking cow, those who derive income by dishonest means, the civil functionaries who merely watch the clock, the teachers who neglect their duties, the officers of the law who mulct and extort, the hoarders, the profiteers—these are all *tulisanes* of the towns and cities.

This evil which Rizal pointed out is compounded in our society because, corrupt as we are, we do not outlaw these *tulisanes*, we do not ostracize them. Instead, we admire them as practical men who know how to live. We fawn upon them because they are not Don Quixotes, idealists or visionaries but ruthless men whose doctrine is "the Devil take the hindmost," and we respect men once they have achieved material success, no matter what the means. Truly, the *tulisanes* are not only in the mountains. They are among us, riding around in Cadillacs.

### THE PELAEZES OF THE PRESENT

The techniques of enrichment exposed by Rizal during his day find their **counterparts** in present-day society. The incident involving **the shrewd** Don Timoteo Pelaez in *El Filibusterismo* no doubt will seem familiar to many of our "Dons" and "Honorable." Don Timoteo was able to bribe the authorities into proclaiming a decree which ordered the destruction of houses of light materials. How did this favor the good Don Timoteo? Simple, he had just received a shipment of galvanized iron. A hitch developed, however. The order for the destruction of the houses was to take effect a month later.

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This worried Don Timoteo because his competitors' shipments might arrive on time. Then it was discovered that the owners of the houses, inconsiderate wretches, were too poor to buy the galvanized sheets. But no matter, Don Timoteo's business friends shrewdly suggested that he buy the houses at a ridiculously low price, have the decree rescinded, and then resell them at an enormous profit. Whether Don Timoteo followed this excellent advice or not, Rizal does not say; but the mere fact that the suggestion was made, and made so matter-of-factly, is proof that these devious business practices were the rule rather than the exception. No one can say that we have run out of Don Timoteos in our time.

### ONE-ARMED BANDITS

Rizal's generation had its own quota of "fixers" and influence peddlers. In Chapter XLIX of the *Noli Me Tangere*, Rizal introduces us to the one-armed man who, upon hearing that the wife of Capitan Tinong had presented the Capitan General with a ring worth ₱1,000 because of Tinong's fear that he might be implicated in the case of Ibarra, hurriedly left the gathering in order to put his vicious plans into operation. Soon after, we find Capitan Tinong taken to Fort Santiago together with other men of position and property. Rizal hints that the one-armed man was engaged in the nefarious trade of first scheming to imprison men of means and position and later working for their release for a certain price. The government employee who purposely enmeshes the citizen in red tape so that he may "facilitate" or "expedite" matters for a consideration, is perhaps only a pocket edition of the one-armed man but his crime is of the same nature.

Rizal, of course, did not foresee the existence of influence peddling and fixing as a thriving profession today. (So thriv-

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ing that I am surprised these ladies and gentlemen have not yet formed an Association of Fixers of the Philippines.) But the fact remains that one more evil in Rizal's Philippine society is still with us.

### BORROWED DEFECTS

One of the tragedies of our country today is that, though formally independent, our people can understand each other (though imperfectly at that) only by means of a language not their own. This is the result of centuries of colonial rule, and we are all its victims. Rizal considered our need for a foreign language as our general medium of communication, both ridiculous and pathetic. He warned strongly about the dangers of a foreign language taking the place of our own. In chapter VII of *El Filibusterismo*, Simoun in replying to the arguments of Basilio, who like other students was working for the adoption of Spanish as a common language, admonished the young man thus:

Spanish will never be the general language of the country, the people will never talk it, because the conceptions of their brains and the feeling of their hearts cannot be expressed in that language—each people has its own tongue, as it has its own way of thinking. What are you going to do with Castilian, the few of you who will speak it? Kill off your own originality, subordinate your thoughts to other brains, and instead of freeing yourselves, make yourselves slaves indeed! . . . He among you who talks that language neglects his own in such a way that he neither writes nor understands it, and how many have I not seen who pretended not to know a single word of it! . . . One and all you forget that while a people preserves its language, it preserves the marks of its liberty, as a man preserves his independence while he holds to his own way of thinking. Language is the thought of the people.

Our language problem is still unresolved. The Basilio and Isaganis whose mission was to propagate the foreign lan-

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guage in order that Filipinos might out-Castilian the Spaniard are still with us, this time pretending that their tongues trip over the long Tagalog words and are at home only in English.

### WITHOUT DEFENCES

When Rizal gave utterance to his views on the national language, he was not speaking as a chauvinist or a sentimentalist. Being himself a linguist, he could not have been against our learning other languages, but only after we had fully mastered our own. It is good to understand and be understood by other peoples but it is essential that we understand each other first. Some may think that this insistence on the use of our native tongue is merely a sentimental and therefore an impractical notion. We need only consider a few of the many evil consequences of our acceptance of a foreign language as our common medium of communication to realize that Simoun's angry reply to the students was true then and is even more true today. Many have condemned our thorough Americanization but only a few realize the large part which our adoption of English has played in this development which we deplore.

By using a foreign language as our basic means of communication, we lay ourselves open, without any defences, to the incursions of a foreign culture. Where the language barrier would have served to temper the flow of this cultural invasion, affording us the opportunity of intelligent, deliberate, and selective assimilation, the irresistible influx of foreign culture for which our use of the foreign language has opened the way, has swept aside our native traditions, manners, and values. We are an uprooted race with very tenuous connections to our past, and consequently we have lost much of our national pride. We have adopted foreign standards and values which are perhaps appropriate for a country with a highly developed econ-

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omy but certainly not for a struggling one like ours. We assiduously try to be Occidental in thinking and manners and this has distorted our policies especially toward our Asian neighbors. Needless to say, our fellow Asians do not have a high regard for us.

Furthermore, because our command of this foreign language is inadequate, we imbibe only the most banal aspects of its culture. Its cultural achievements are beyond our comprehension. Instead of possessing the best of both cultures as defenders of English like to claim, the majority of our people are acquainted only with the less edifying aspects of the foreign culture and have stifled the development of their native culture or influenced its meager development in a deplorable imitation of the foreign. Our native literature has not developed because we prefer foreign dime novels and comics. Our native theatre was smothered in its infancy by our preference for American movies. On the other hand, the poor showing of Philippine films in competition with other Asian films may perhaps be traced to our loss of national individuality so that our films are only Tagalog versions of American movies, without distinct national flavor. Our native music has not had a chance to flower, because we are enamoured with rock and roll. Truly, we have bartered our heritage for a mess of potage and we are choking on it.

### OUR INTELLECTUAL CAPTIVITY

The predicament of our student population whose scholastic life is one continuous struggle with the English language is one more case that bears out Rizal's thesis. Those who are honest among us will have to admit that our inadequate grasp of the nuances of the language is the greatest obstacle to our acquisition of knowledge. The hordes of semi-literate profes-

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sionals that our educational system produces, year in and year out, are eloquent proof of the need for a change in our medium of instruction. Rizal was against the adoption of Spanish as the common language of our people. In the words of Simoun, which I quoted previously, Rizal clearly states his belief that the use of a foreign tongue as our common language would result in our intellectual captivity. We have not heeded his warning. Instead, our patriotic lawmakers have even imposed 24 units of Spanish on our already bewildered student population.

The social problems of Rizal's times are still our problems. It is not surprising, therefore, that the people of Rizal's novels still live in our midst. Rizal drew them from real life; they are as real today. The Doña Victorinas who belittle the Filipinos and pretend to be Occidentals, the Capitan Tiagos who fawn upon and cringe before the powers that be, wining and dining them, and suffering their contempt so long as their businesses continue to prosper, never giving the plight of their fellowmen a moment's thought, the Señor Pastas who persist in a life of compromise and conformism—these are only a few of Rizal's gallery of characters who still inhabit the world our hero left so many years ago.

### FOREIGNERS' PARADISE

We exhibit the same attitude toward Westerners which Rizal sought to expose in his works. In our country today, the foreigner out to make his fortune has the best chance for success. Many doors of opportunity are open to him. Because we have gotten used to regarding the white man as our superior, we have accorded him more privileges than he would enjoy elsewhere. Rizal must have seen many instances of this same attitude during his time, for many incidents in his novels are

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good examples of this defect in our character. There was the case of the Spanish tax collector who was accidentally killed by Don Rafael Ibarra. Here was an illiterate Spaniard who was given a fairly responsible job for which he had not the slightest qualification simply because he was a Spaniard and must therefore not demean himself with manual labor. Then there was the case of Don Tiburcio de Espadaña who was accepted as a physician and charged high fees only because he had come from Spain where, incidentally, the sum total of his medical experience had consisted in dusting off the benches and lighting the fires in a hospital. However, as is the case today, too, this lame, toothless but white man was considered a better marital catch than any better educated native.

Many of the important foreigners in our society today are prototypes of Don Custodio de Salazar y Sanchez de Montere-dondo, a character in Rizal's *El Filibusterismo* who was considered learned and influential in this country, but who was a small and insignificant person in his native land. The Custodios of today wield great power in the economic, social, and political life of our country, but like Rizal's Don Custodio, it is doubtful if these personages, had they remained in their homelands, could command a second look in the side streets of their neighborhood.

### A BROKEN PEOPLE

In the current move of nationalist elements to instill the Filipino First ideal among our people, Rizal's words on the subject are most applicable. Those elements in our country who are still resisting the resurgence of nationalism should read Rizal's *The Philippines a Century Hence* and *The Indolence of the Filipinos* for in these essays he tried to show that centuries of systematic brutalization had transformed the proud,



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free Filipino into a servile slave without individuality and pride. Rizal describes our degeneration in these words:

They gradually lost their ancient traditions, their recollections, — they forgot their writings, their songs, their poetry, their laws in order to learn by heart other doctrines, which they did not understand, other ethics, other tastes, different from those inspired in their race by their climate and their way of thinking. Then there was a falling-off, they were lowered in their own eyes, they became ashamed of what was distinctively their own, in order to admire and praise what was foreign and incomprehensible, their spirit was broken and they acquiesced.

Rizal did not want us to acquiesce. He sought to instill in his countrymen a sense of pride in their past so that, proud of what they had been, they would want to make the present and the future worthy of the past. When we try to re-establish our roots, when we try to rediscover our culture today, we are accomplishing what Rizal wanted his contemporaries to accomplish.

In *The Indolence of the Filipinos*, Rizal rebuked his countrymen for their lack of nationalist sentiment by stating that "A man in the Philippines is only an individual. He is not a member of a nation." Many Filipinos today, like the Filipinos Rizal was referring to, are working merely for their own interests, hardly taking into consideration the common good. Little men preoccupied with the pursuit of their petty personal goals, their apathy towards national questions springs from their circumscribed perspective and from their fear of arousing the ire of the powers that be. Like the people of Cablesang Tales' town, many of our compatriots would rather be on the safe side, protecting their own interests, even though this would mean acquiescing to some injustice perpetrated on their fellowmen. Conditioned to submission, resigned to foreign domination, their timidity, their vacillation dissipates the efforts of their

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more resolute countrymen to regain for all Filipinos the control of our national life.

## BASILIOS IN OUR MIDST

Rizal's Basilio is the prototype of these weak men. Basilio forgot his past, the murder of his brother Crispin, and the death of Sisa, his mother. These personal misfortunes were not enough to motivate him to work so that others would not be victims of the injustices his family had endured. He refused to join Simoun, not so much from disapproval of the latter's methods as from a personal indifference toward what he termed "political questions." His rationalization, and this is a common one today, was that he was a man of science and therefore it was not his job to concern himself with anything more than the healing of the sick. Instead of making him more determined to defend his fellowmen from oppression, Basilio's personal experience with cruelty and injustice turned him into a timid man who wanted only to be left in peace in his little corner of the earth, enjoying a modicum of success. Only when this personal ambition was thwarted by his imprisonment after the incident of the pasquinades did Basilio decide to join Simoun. And even then, his aim was to avenge himself and not to help his fellowmen.

## FROM ASOCIAL TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

If we read Rizal carefully, we will soon realize that his dream for our country can be attained only by a dedicated, hard working, socially responsible citizenry. It is tragic, therefore, that there are so very many Basilios among us today. Basilio was essentially good. He was hard working, did no one any harm. In an already stable and prosperous country,



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such citizens as Basilio might be desirable; but in Rizal's Philippines as well as in ours, where so many reforms are still needed, we should have men with social conscience who will consider it their obligation to do more than just obey the laws. The Basilio's will never move mountains. Instead, their desire for the fulfillment of their personal ambitions will make them temporize with tyranny, compromise with oppression, cross the street to avoid seeing injustice, look the other way to ignore corruption. Our students, our professionals today, often exhibit the qualities of Basilio. At best they try to do their jobs competently but are indifferent to the issues and the problems that face our country. Those who start like Basilio but who do not possess his essential goodness degenerate from asocial individualism to definitely anti-social behaviour in pursuit of their individualistic goals. They may hoard essential commodities and sell them at exorbitant prices, unmindful of the misery they are bringing to their countrymen. They may become dummies for foreign interests, corrupt government officials, servile mouthpieces of alien groups, ten percenters, influence peddlers, and cynical racketeers whom our corrupt society rewards with material wealth and even prestige.

### A NATION OF RIZALS

Rizal was never like Basilio. He, too, suffered injustice early in life when he saw his mother unjustly imprisoned; but far from making him timid and afraid, it spurred him to work for justice and freedom, not for his family but for all Filipinos. Not only his death, but more importantly, his whole life gave evidence of his constant preoccupation with the problems of his country, his involvement in the movement against oppression, ignorance, poverty, and degradation. Rizal's personal goals were always in accordance with what he considered to be the

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best interests of the country. It is in this sense that we can say we need a nation of Rizals. But we do not need a hero to die for our country. We need a nation of heroes who will live and work with patriotic dedication to realize Rizal's dream.

As long as we can still marvel at the contemporaneity of Rizal, at his "timelessness," we must admit that many years after he had presented the problems, we have not yet taken the basic steps towards their solution. When a new generation of Filipinos will be able to read Rizal as a mirror of our past and not as a reproach to our social present, only then can we say that we have truly honored Rizal because we have made him obsolete by completing his work.

### FROM DREAM TO REALITY

We are still backward, ignorant and to a great extent, unfree. That is why Rizal can still speak to us with the same sense of urgency and immediacy that he produced among his contemporaries. When he is no longer valid, we shall have become a truly great nation and Rizal will no longer be read for the social truths he can reveal. But to make him obsolete does not mean to forget him. On the contrary, only when we have realized Rizal's dream can we really appreciate his greatness because only then will we realize the great value of his ideals.

When Rizal becomes obsolete, our society will no longer be infected with Doña Victorinas, because the triumph of nationalism will make us all proud of our race. There will no longer be any Basilio's because each and everyone will consider it beneath his manhood to be concerned only with personal, material success. We shall have no more Simouns motivated by personal revenge. Philippine society will frown on the

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Pastas and the other fawning and obsequious minor officials whose only interest is to retain their sinecures. A reorientation of our ways and of our thoughts along nationalist lines will fulfill the dreams of Rizal and at the same time make them obsolete as goals because the dream will have become a reality.

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**Reactions and Comments..... Continued**

"The virtue (then) of the essays of Mr. Constantino in this book lies not so much in the clarity and effectiveness of his manner and style in the use of the English language as an expression of the nationalist Filipino mind, but in the dominant theme and subject he has chosen to write about -- the Filipinos in the Philippines. This is a consistent pre-occupation with Mr. Constantino which should earn for him the title of The Filipino writer's Filipino writer. His commitment has the force of that tradition of duty which was best exemplified in Marcelo H. del Pilar in his time."

**E. AGUILAR CRUZ,**  
BERT MC DONA From the INTRODUCTION

"Constantino is rated as one of the most readable of local writers. That he writes about the foibles of the Filipinos and the things that are fake should make this latest contribution to the book world truly intriguing."

**TEODORO F. VALENCIA**  
Manila Times, October 21, 1966

"Thesis apart, the strength of Constantino's book is his examination of the quality of Philippine life. In this, he seems to have pre-empted a field that properly belongs to the novelist. With the exception of a few, no one has cast a colder eye on the meretricious character of metropolitan life -- the false values, the greed and the hypocritical pretension that lie at the very heart of corruption."

**ARMANDO D. MANALO**  
Manila Chronicle, May 16, 1967

"Few writers have presented a unified view of our society. Fewer still have presented Filipino society from the nationalist point of view. To the foreigner-reader this book may lend illumination toward an understanding of Philippine society as it has evolved from foreign political, economic, and social influences.

Whether satirical or seriously analytical, the essays in this book provoke the reader to a reacquaintance with his society and challenge him to review existing concepts in the light of the nationalist thesis."

**SENATOR LORENZO M. TAÑADA,**  
from the FOREWORD